

The Unspeakable Gift.

Text: 2 Cor 9:15

Suggested Hymns:

- 1) The Unspeakable Gift
- 2) How Are We To Receive
This Wondrous Gift From Heaven

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our address this evening is 2 Corinthians 9:15, ¹⁵ ***Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.*** (ASV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

The night to which we all have been looking forward and for which we have been impatiently waiting has come at last. *“O holy night, the stars are brightly shining! It is the night of our dear Saviour’s birth!”*

For weeks we have been preparing our hearts and homes, our lips and voices, for this happy celebration of the birth of our King. And tonight, under the glow of cheering Christmas lights and to the melody of the old, familiar, beautiful Christmas carols, we have once more brought our sacrifice of praise to our infant Lord and Saviour.

In a few moments we shall be returning to our homes, there to continue our joyful celebration — tonight, tomorrow, and throughout the coming week. An important feature of our remaining celebration will, no doubt, be the exchange of Christmas presents.

Father, mother, sister, brother, every member of the family circle, will experience the pleasure of an unexpected gift, the token of the love of him or her who gives it. And for days our lips will be engaged, our minds will be occupied, and our hands will be kept busy, with the many, many gifts of Christmas.

It is hoped that every child in church tonight will be remembered, and will receive the gifts of Christmas, and experience the joy which such remembrances must always bring.

Christian children, however, do not find their highest Christmas joy in the toys, ornaments and decorations which are spread around the Christmas tree. They know of a Christmas gift more wonderful, more beautiful, more precious, than all the gifts the world can give.

And it is this gift which I tonight would like to place, as a jewel in a costly setting, in the centre of and above all your earthly Christmas gifts as I speak to you on *The Unspeakable Gift*. May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. The Unspeakable Gift

Speaking to all Christians of all times, St. Paul says in our text, ***Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!*** Just what this great and unspeakable Gift was that God the Father sent to earth on Christmas Eve you children of course know very well. It was the gift of His own dear Son, the little Christ-child.

“For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given,” says the prophet Isaiah.¹ Unto us God’s Son is given. ¹⁶ ***“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”***² On Christmas Eve God gave the world the dearest, the highest, the greatest Treasure that He owned, ***“His only-begotten Son,”*** the little Christ-child, our Saviour and Redeemer.

But why is the Gift of Bethlehem’s Babe so unspeakably precious to the Christian’s heart? My dear young friends, it is because of the unspeakable blessings which He brings and which Jesus imparts to every human soul.

Martin Luther wrote in one of his hymns,³

*He brings those blessings, long ago
Prepared by God for all below,
That in His kingdom bright and fair
You may with us His glory share.*

As Christian children you have already shared, and are continuing to share, in all the heavenly gifts and blessings which the infant Saviour brought from His home in heaven to His children here on earth.

In your baptism you were accepted as children of God’s family, placed under His loving guidance and protection. Your baptism was a gift of Jesus. As you grew older, you enjoyed the advantages of a Christian family circle, learned your

bedtime prayers, joined in family devotions and table prayers, and learned the way to heaven. That Christian family circle to which you owe so much is another gift of Jesus.

You know that you have sinned. You broke the Lord's commandments. But you have learned that those who receive the Saviour, believe and trust in Him for their salvation, can have forgiveness. That forgiveness, unspeakably sweet forgiveness, is another gift of Jesus.

You have learned of heaven which Jesus called His Father's house and where all those who believe in Him will live with Him and see Him face to face some day. That heaven, which is ours, is another gift of Jesus.

And so we might go on, counting our blessings one by one, mentioning all the gifts of life which are most dear and most precious to us, and we would find that all of them lead us back to that little Babe in Bethlehem's manger. He is the Author of them all! The secret of all that is best, all that is highest, all that is noblest, in our lives can be found "*wrapped in swaddling-clothes and lying in a manger.*"⁴

Surely the infant Christ-child, our adorable Saviour, is the Christian's unspeakable Gift. And so we sing tonight: ⁵

*How silently, how silently,
The wondrous Gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heaven.*

2. How Are We To Receive This Wondrous Gift From Heaven

But how are Christian children to receive this wondrous Gift of heaven? That is what the Apostle Paul is telling us in our text this evening. "*Thanks be to God,*" he says, "*thanks be to God for His unspeakable Gift.*"

Our whole Christmas celebration is to form one mighty chorus of "*I thank Thee, Lord, I thank Thee!*"

We overflow with gratitude and rejoice with the hymnist,⁶

*I thank Thee, Jesus, sun from heaven,
Whose shining hath brought light to me;*

*I thank Thee, who hast richly given
All that could make me glad and free;
I thank Thee that my soul is healed
By what Thy lips revealed.*

Like the shepherds, who, when their eyes had seen the Baby Jesus, were **“glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen,”**⁷ we also are to make of tonight and of the days which are to follow, a season of thanksgiving. Tonight and tomorrow, at home and at church, wherever we may be, throughout all our festivities, our hearts are to be filled with thanks to God for His unspeakable Gift.

The Bible has not left us without beautiful examples of God-pleasing thanksgiving at Christmas time.

The Wise Men from the East saw the star and immediately followed it to Jerusalem. Then they followed the star to Bethlehem. By the time they arrived Jesus was now a **young child** and living with His parents in a house. We are told that, when they saw the Christ-child, they **“fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”**⁸ In their own way they wished to show their gratitude. And so they offered gifts, feeble tokens of their appreciation of God’s unspeakable Gift.

And that, my dear young friends, you, too, can do tonight. As we stand at the manger-side of our heavenly Saviour tonight, we can bring to Him the offerings of our love and gratitude.

Our heart, our mind, our love, our life, our self, we can bring them all as gifts to Jesus. What the Saviour asks of us is told to us in Proverbs 23:26, ²⁶ **My son, give me your heart.**

Let us, then, tonight **“lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven”**⁹ and pray,¹⁰

*Take my heart: it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.*

Another hymnist expresses gratitude in this way¹¹

*We too would bring our treasures
To offer to the King;
We have no wealth or learning—
What shall we children bring?
We'll bring Him hearts that love Him,
We'll bring Him thankful praise.*

And having considered the example of the grateful Wise Men, let us also consider the example of the grateful shepherds, of whom we are told that, “**when they had seen Him** [God’s precious Gift to them], **they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.**” The news was too good to be kept. They had to speak. They had to tell some one about this unspeakable Gift which they had seen in the lowly manger bed in Bethlehem.

Martin Luther wrote,¹²

*My heart for very joy doth leap,
My lips no more can silence keep;*

No doubt the shepherds felt very much the same as Simon Peter did when he exclaimed, ²⁰ “**For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard**” as we read in Acts 4:20. And so, my friends, all genuine gratitude demands expression. It demands that we say something about the Gift we have received.

Consider how you would feel, if tonight you gave your most costly Christmas gift to a friend of yours and tomorrow, in telling of the many gifts which he received, he did not even mention yours. You would at once suspect a lack of appreciation, and a lack of gratitude. Surely, if he had appreciated it, he would have mentioned it!

And so, too, with our unspeakable Christmas Gift, the blessed Christ-child. This Gift must be mentioned. It must be advertised. It must be spoken of if we are to prove ourselves truly thankful. Thousands of children in our country have never learned to know the Saviour.

Perhaps some of these children are your friends and playmates. Speak to them of God's great Christmas Gift to all His children. Tell them the story of the new-born Christ-child and the countless blessings He has brought.

With thankful hearts, glorify God for all the things that He has done, and make known abroad the saying which has been told to you concerning this little Child.

*No other child, no other Saviour,
Could ever help this sinful earth.
So take the Gift the Father sent us
And spread the story of His birth. Amen.*

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Isaiah 9:6

² John 3:16

³ Hymn 23

⁴ Luke 2:12

⁵ Hymn 633, O little town of Bethlehem

⁶ Hymn 359

⁷ Luke 2:20

⁸ Matthew 2:11

⁹ Lamentations 3:41

¹⁰ Hymn 377

¹¹ Hymn 619

¹² Hymn 23