

WHAT DOES CHRISTMAS MEAN TO ME

C is for Christ who came as a babe...living He loved me, dying He saved me, buried He carried my sins far away, rising He justified freely forever ... One day he's coming, Oh glorious day!

H is for hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time. (Titus 1:2)

R is for righteousness that has been revealed by God that is by faith from first to last. (Romans 1:17)

I is for Immanuel (God with us)

S is for shepherds of whom Jesus Christ is the Chief Shepherd...the Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.

T is for the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that are hidden in Christ. (Colossians 2:3)

M is for magi who came to worship Jesus for He is truly worthy.

A is for angels who said, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests." (Luke 2:14)

S is for the star that led to the bright Morning Star...Jesus Himself. (Revelation 22:16)

Author Unknown

★
joy
grace
hope - love
faith - peace
honor - purity
courage - loyalty
goodness - prudence
sympathy - humility
fortitude - temperance
brotherhood - cooperation
and
God
is
love

Author Unknown

What You Can Give Jesus this Christmas¹

Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
Spillman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
December 26, 2021

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

Purpose: To help us realize that we have something to give to Jesus.
The gift of Lordship, the gift of fellowship, and the gift of Sonship.

In 1247, a hospital was founded in England called St. Mary of Bethlehem. Two centuries later it was converted into a hospital for the insane. The patients were often chained and abused, and the institution became known throughout the country for its noise and confusion. The original name of Bethlehem was gradually shortened to Bedlam, a word that has come into the English language as meaning any place of wild uproar and confusion. The same could describe Christmas. Christmas is more Bedlam than it is Bethlehem.



With all the activities, shopping and buying, parties, and all else that is commonly associated with Christmas, many no doubt feel overwhelmed by the madness.

¹ Sermon Notebook, Matthew 2:1-12



A few years ago, there was a video on Facebook that showed a church play with several small children playing the various roles of Mary, Joseph, along with several shepherds and wise men. One of the three-year-old shepherds decided baby Jesus needed to be taken out of the manger and held. Well, the three-year-old Mary didn't like what was happening and decided the baby needed to go back into the manger. As you can guess, this did not turn out well as the two three-year-olds were fighting for possession of the baby Jesus while the youth choir continued to sing and the congregation was laughing. Thank goodness the mother of one of the children came to the rescue!

I heard about another Christmas play a church was having with the little children dressed up as shepherds, wise men, and etc. The highlight of the Christmas play was to show the radiance of Jesus. An electric bulb was hidden in the manger. All the stage lights were to be turned off leaving only one light on the manger. At the appropriate time all lights went out - Even the manger light. The silence was broken when one of the shepherds loudly whispered, "Hey, you turned off Jesus."

For most of the world, Bethlehem has become Bedlam because Jesus has been turned off in many a person's life. I think we all would agree that Christmas is characterized by shopping rather than the Savior. More thought is given to gifts for the family than the gift from God. More time is given to celebration than adoration.



One of the things that characterizes Christmas is the spirit of giving. For hundreds of years dating back to Constantine, giving has been part of the festivities of Christmas.

When we look at the first Christmas, we see the spirit of giving. We see the ultimate Giver and the Ultimate Gift. We see a giving God and a given Son. We see the greatest Christmas gift ever given. We also see the wise men bringing their gifts to present to the Christ Child. The Magi (Wise men) were men skilled in philosophy, medicine, and natural science. They were also soothsayers and interpreters of dreams. They were interested in astrology thus their attention was caught by the star that led them to the Christ-child.



Have you even thought about giving Jesus anything this Christmas? Have you even included Him on your Christmas list? If there is anyone who should receive a gift, it is Jesus! What can you give Him? Would you buy Him a suit? Yet, where would you get His size, for the heavens can't contain Him. Maybe a gift certificate. Yet, He owns it all and there is nothing He needs or ever will need. I think the kind of gifts the Magi gave to Him would be excellent. I'm not talking about actual gold, frankincense, and myrrh. I'm talking about what they represented and symbolized.



This morning, let us consider bringing three gifts to Jesus this Christmas. These three gifts can be representative of the three that the wise men gave Jesus that first Christmas.

I. GOLD - THE GIFT OF LORDSHIP!

One gift that was given to Jesus there in Bethlehem by the Magi was gold. Gold was the gift for a King. Seneca tells us that in Parthia (where these Magi were from) it was the custom that no one could ever approach the king without a gift. Gold, the king of metals, was a fitting gift for a king. In verse 2, we read that these wise men their search asked the question, *"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews?"* They recognized that Jesus was King of kings and the best gift for a King was gold. Have you recognized Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords in your life? Is He just an infant baby or an Infinite Lord to you?

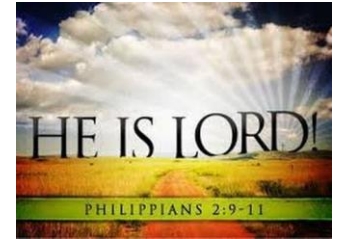


Nelson, the great admiral, always treated his vanquished opponents with the greatest kindness and courtesy. After one of his naval victories, the defeated admiral was brought aboard Nelson's flagship and on to Nelson's quarter-deck. Knowing Nelson's reputation for courtesy, he advanced across the quarter-deck with outstretched hand as if he were advancing to shake hands with an equal. Nelson's hand remained by his side. "Your sword first," Nelson said, "then your hand." Don't we hear our Lord saying the same to us. "Your sword first. I am your Conqueror. You are my subject."

A fitting gift for Jesus would be that of Lordship! A fitting and proper gift would be to lay your life at His feet and crown Him King and make Him Lord of your life.

A. Jesus' Lordship of Our Life Is Demanded.

Paul said in Phil. 2:10-11, *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God."* Paul did not say that every knee would bow but should bow. He did not say every tongue would confess that Jesus is Lord, but that every tongue should confess that Jesus is Lord.



Back in AD 274 an emperor of the old world chose December 25th as the "Birthday of the Unconquered Sun." He recognized that at this midwinter date the sun reaches its lowest point in the Southern sky and begins its gradual movement northward again. I am reminded that December 25th is not only the day of the Unconquered Sun often a day of unconquered sons (Sons of God).

Charlemagne was crowned emperor of the Holy Empire on Christmas Day.

William the Conqueror was crowned King of England on Christmas day.

Shouldn't Jesus be crowned as King in your life at Christmas?

Alan Redpath said, "**Jesus does not come into your life on the basis of a democracy: He comes on the basis of a dictatorship.**" He demands Lordship.

B. Jesus' Lordship of Our Life is Deserved.

If He is our King, then He has the right to rule and reign over our lives. As King He demands our submission. But even more, He deserves our submission.



Let's imagine a couple on their wedding day. Let's call them Kathy and Tom. The wedding is over. The cake has been cut, the rice has been thrown. Kathy and Tom are finally in the car alone. As they drive away amidst the chorus of well-wishers, Kathy moves away from Tom and she says, "Tom, take me home." And he says, "Home? Why Kathy, you know our home won't be ready for two weeks. Now we are going on our honeymoon." "Oh, no, Tom. I don't mean your home. I mean my home. My mother's home. Tom, I really do love you and I have taken you as my husband but you don't expect me to change my life, do you? I'll try to see you once a week if it's convenient. And when I'm sick, I'll expect you to come. And when I run out of money, Tom, I'll expect you to provide it and if there is something I can't handle, I'll expect you to help me out. But in the meantime, hands off my life." I say that wouldn't be a marriage. That would be a mockery.

Yet there are thousands of people who say to the Lord Jesus, "Jesus, thank You for loving me. I accept You as my Savior. If it's convenient and if I'm sick, I'll expect You to heal me. And if I'm out of money, I'll expect You to provide

some help, but Jesus, You don't expect me to change my life, do You? Hands off my life!"

We say, "Hands off, Jesus! Don't expect me to come to Church every Sunday. Don't expect me to come to Sunday School or on midweek Bible study. Don't expect me to give 10% of my income. Don't expect me to work in the Church." If that is your attitude and your kind of Christianity, then I say to you that Jesus is not Lord of your life. What is sad about it all is that He deserves nothing less. Seeing the love that He showed and the life that He gave, He deserves nothing less.

II. FRANKINCENSE - THE GIFT OF FELLOWSHIP!



A second gift we see the Magi bring is frankincense. Whereas gold was a gift for a King, frankincense was a gift for a priest. Frankincense was used in the temple worship and in the temple sacrifices. It was a sweet perfume that rose up to God. Often in the Bible Frankincense is symbolic of our prayers rising up to God. One of the greatest gifts we can give to someone is just ourselves. Spending time with them.

Most of us are like Martha (especially at this time of year) - Busy, busy, busy. Rushed to death, pressed for time. But so few are like Mary that took time to sit at His feet. The Innkeeper said **THAT THERE WAS NO ROOM FOR HIM IN THE INN**. Do we by our actions say **THAT THERE IS NO TIME FOR HIM IN OUR LIFE**. At Christmas many are found in places other than at Bethlehem.

More are attracted to every trivial thing than to the glorious sight, for which the shepherds left their flocks and made haste to view. The sight which the Eastern sages came such a vast distant to behold, which drew all Heaven down to earth, is nothing to many. Some, while they observe the day of Christ's birth by doing no work, not only neglect Him, but insult Him by the evil deed that they do. Instead of fixing their eyes on the Star of Bethlehem, they give attention of the little, debasing, and defiling things of the world. Wickedness instead of worship often prevails. We have time for everything and everyone but Jesus! A fitting gift would be some time set aside just to spend with Jesus.

I once read about a father and his young daughter that were very close and spent much time together. Then the father began to notice a change in his daughter. If he went for a walk, she excused herself from going.



Whenever he asked her to do something with him, she always had an excuse. The father was disturbed about it and didn't understand what was happening between them. When his birthday came, she presented him with a pair of slippers saying, "I made them for you." Then the father understood what had been happening over the past 3 months. She had been excusing herself so she could work on the slippers she made for his birthday. He reached down and pulled her close and said, "My darling, I love the slippers, but next time buy the slippers and let me have you all the days. I would rather have my child than anything she can make for me."

We get so busy that we fail to give the Lord the one thing He wants - OURSELVES! Let me encourage you to give frankincense to Jesus for Christmas. Take time to be **THOUGHTFUL** of Him and **THANKFUL** for Him.

III. MYRRH - A GIFT OF SONSHIP!

*Myrrh
Resin*



The third gift we see the Magi bring is myrrh. Myrrh was a perfume that was used to embalm the bodies of the dead. These wise men knew that this was not only a King and Priest, but also a Savior born to die. They knew that the child they were looking at in a cradle would one day be seen on a cross. Jesus became the Son of Man and died that I might become a son of God and live.

A fitting gift for Jesus would be for you to come to Him and say, "Lord Jesus. You died for me that I might become your child. So, this Christmas I come to you and give you my heart as a gift. Please come into my heart and be my Savior. You came to earth that I might go to heaven. You died that I might live. You who had no beginning came that I might have no ending. You who lived in eternity came that I might live in eternity. You who were sinless came for me the sinful. I ask you to be my Lord and Savior".

I read about a fire in Liverpool, England. The house that caught fire was called "The Sailors Home." It was a place that sailors would often stay. People began to assemble and noticed in the upper stories' men crying out for help. Someone rushed



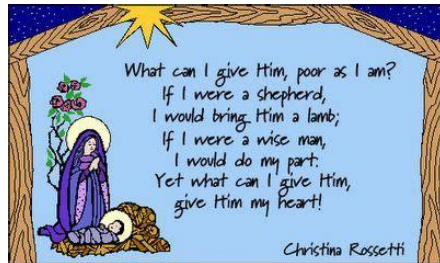
to get a ladder. When it was raised, it was found to be too short. A sailor in the crowd rushed up the ladder, and balanced himself on the uppermost round of the ladder, and seized the window with his hands and shouted, "Quick men, scramble over my body, and down the ladder." One by one the men came down until all were saved. Finally, the sailor came down, his face burned, his hair singed, and his fingers blistered; but he had saved the men.

That ladder had gone a long way; but before the men could be saved it needed the length of a man. That's what Jesus did when He came to this earth. He spanned the gap between God and man. He was born to die. He died that we might live. If you are not saved, give Him your heart.

This year as we gather as families, we need to consider what we will give Jesus this Christmas.

Have you given Him the gift of gold – which is Lordship? Maybe you have confessed Jesus as your Savior, but have you made Him the Lord of your life?

Have you given Him the gift of frankincense – which is fellowship? Our lives can become busy that we do not take time to communicate in prayer with our heavenly father? When was the last time you stopped DOING and opened your heart to God? Jesus is as close as the mentioning of His name. Give the gift of fellowship this year.



Have you given Him the gift of myrrh – which is sonship? Jesus came as God's one and only son. Whosoever believes in Him shall never die. When we accept God's son as our Savior and Lord, we then become heirs of God's promise of eternal life. Christ died and was anointed with spices. When we identify with Christ, we accept His death, burial, and resurrection as our own. Our sins are buried with Christ and just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead three days later, we too are raised to newness of life. We become new creatures in Christ.

Even though Christmas Day has passed, don't forget the reason for the season is Jesus.



Fred Jarvis wrote a poem titled, "Suppose." I will close with this poem this morning.

Suppose by Fred Jarvis

Suppose it were your birthday
And all your friends would come
And gather around your fireplace
There in your happy home.

They come with smiles and gladness:
And bring their presents, too.
But when they start to share them
There's not one for you.

They give them to each other,
A grand and costly lot.
But for the quest of honor
They somehow just forgot.

You say such things don't happen
Nor should it ever be;
It seems too crude and cruel
For folks like you and me.

But friend have you considered
Just this is what men do?
Not, of course, to humans,
But of our Lord, it is true.

We celebrate His birthday
With all our pomp and style;
But give to one another
And grieve Him all the while.

'Tis Christ we claim to honor
At this glad Christmas time;
Don't spend on friends the dollars
And give Him just a dime.

To give to one another
Indeed is very nice;
But best of all to Jesus
For Him let's sacrifice.

His cause too long has suffered
By thoughtless, selfish men.
Let's bring to Christ the first fruits
And give our best to Him.

LET US PRAY