

“He Gave Gifts to Man”

By Brother Parrish Lee

Sunday, December 28th, 2014

For those of you who don't know me, I am Parrish Lee. Andy Giebler and I, we are the co-fellowship leaders for up here, and we don't make a big deal about any of that. Actually, just call ourselves people who help lead the fellowship, because, let's face it, it's a family, you know? And we're drawing together, and we all come together, and we bring our beliefs, and we take them to the Lord. And it's just amazing, I can tell where all the sick people normally sit. All the people that are out sick today, they obviously normally sit on this side!

We want to welcome all of our visitors, our military guests, we want to welcome you. We want to welcome—we see some family members. We see Aaron, Arman's son Aaron is here; we'd like to welcome him and his family, of course. We see two people that we see where our brother Jason gets his looks from, because he looks exactly like them. I'm not going to steal your thunder, brother; stand up and introduce them, would you please?

JASON: Yeah, this is my father and my mother, Lenny and Christina.

Amen! And, would our military visitors stand? Our military guests? Let's give the Lord a praise. It's wonderful to be back; it's wonderful to see everyone. It's good to see so many smiling faces, but we do have to keep so many people in prayer. There is so much illness. They say that the flu vaccine that they gave out—I got it!—they said it was the wrong one, so it really didn't do what it was supposed to do, so that's why you see people sick everywhere. At least that's what I heard. Maybe I got a good dose. Many people I know, people at work, obviously people in the ministry—we need to be able to just keep each other in prayer, amen? Amen.

We hope everyone has had a wonderful Christmastime. We hope that this has been a time of just benefit for every one, that everyone has been able to receive good things from the Lord and from the family, in the entire atmosphere of the entire time. This is the time where we put the tree away, and figure out how to work off those extra Christmas pounds, and for a few, yes, a few, thinking about exchanging a gift or maybe re-gifting a gift. We are a blessed people.

We've taken, this month, our theme of the month has been a Savior has come, with our Scripture theme being from Luke 2.

Luke 2:10 *And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.*

Giving honor to that same Lord, God our Father, who is Lord of all and King of all, who is the reason why we are here, the giver of all good and perfect gifts. Giving honor to those who have stood, and paved the way for our ministry: Our founding pastor, he and his family, to our pastor, he and his family, who was here just recently, to those who have stood in the gap and made up the hedge. Giving honor, of course, to all of you to present yourselves and to say nothing will deter you, that you will come in service and obeisance to the Lord that you might receive of Him according to that which he has given to His people.

If you could just bow your heads with me for just a moment. Lord, we thank You truly, God, as You've allowed us to have time to lift our voices and to honor You and to cherish You, God, to worship

You and to praise You. Lord, You are indeed the giver of all good and perfect gifts according to Your Word. God, we thank You for the opportunity to meet with each other. And, yes, Lord, we ask for a blessing on those who are not able to be here because of illness, or something that is keeping them away that they have to take care of. We ask for a blessing on their lives. God, we ask for a blessing on this message, also, that it would do, according to Your Word, exactly as You have sent it to do, to accomplish in all of our lives. That it would not return unto You void, but would accomplish all that You have sent it to be. So, therefore, Lord, we thank You and praise You, believing that You are the giver of all those good and perfect gifts. This we do pray and claim in Jesus' name, and everyone said amen. Amen.

So, here we are, the first service after Christmas, at least, after what the world calls Christmas Day. Our theme of the month has actually been 'A Savior Has Come.' We already read the Scripture. We had our services—a brief recap: The first service of the month, talking about 'a Savior Has Come,' talked about the Promise, the promise that the Lord left us, and in the promise that the Lord left us, the power of a promise is that, for those who believe in the promise, it give hope. That was our first message for the month, followed by a message was by our General Pastor, who, as he and his wife Debbie visited, it was such a wonderful occasion, and they're just talking so much about how received. We talk about how much they gave; they talk about how much they received. What a blessed time it was. That's just how God is. Our General Pastor came, and he talked to the sisters and the young people, and he shared the Scripture: Isaiah 9:6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given..." I wasn't here Last Sunday, but, Brother Chris Ulrich, I heard about the message, 'So This Is Christmas.' What I heard was that at several points, but at one point he started talking about our young people, and some of the things that the Lord has put into their lives; the lives of the young people. In the eyes of the Lord, all of us—let's face it, from eternity to eternity—all of us are right there in the same range; we are all just His children. But the young is from the perception of the things that the Lord has poured in their life. Amen.

Today, our service is going to be the after-Christmas message, entitled, "He Gave Gifts to Man."

Introduction

I thought I was going to be in for a treat when my flight pulled into town, because it was 45°. Yeah. It was a trick. It was a trick.

Matthew 2:2 *Saying, where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.*

"...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." This, of course, being said by the wise men, and we've talked a little bit about them this month. We want to point out that by the time they had gotten to the Lord, He was no longer the babe in the manger; the Bible says He was a young Child. The first time I ever heard that was in one of the Children's Church plays. Yeah, the first time I ever heard that. Amen. It brought a whole new meaning to Christmas, because we see the little TV shows, and we get the whole thing in our mind real quick, and, you know, it all must have happened in one day. All the animals learned how to talk overnight, and then, all of the sudden they're back speaking animal-ese. All in one day it happened, but, as you read the Bible, you see that there was a sequence of events. The point is that they said, "...We have seen his star... and are come to worship him." Yes, this is truly—if you want to say Christmas Day, this is an after-Christmas message, and this is just the one for it, because the fact of the matter is, they were earnestly seeking; they wanted to know about this King of the Jews. But, once they got to Herod—because they figured, "Hey, if anybody's going to know, the most important, prestigious people in the land, they, of course, are going to know about this." But, after they got to Herod, they found out that he didn't even have a clue, and

wasn't even looking for another king. I can imagine the surprise that they must have felt; they've come a long way, and this guy wasn't even looking or anything, and, all of the sudden, he started feigning some interest, "Okay, okay, let's go out, and let's find him." The Bible says that when they found the star, they rejoiced, and went looking for the chosen spot. But, the point is, not everybody was looking for the King or the secret. Not everybody—even when you talk about it, it doesn't even hold an interest for many people. "The King has come, and His star, that lights the way... The brilliance of showing the path, it is now revealed." Not everybody's going to have that interest. So, we go on to this, He gave gifts unto man.

Part 1: The Nature of the Gift

Ephesians 4:8 *Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

"Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The Lord actually is the originator of giving the gift that keeps on giving. He is the first one to give the gift that keeps on giving. The first time I heard that, I thought it was kind of funny. I didn't really understand it, but it had an origin, somewhere. The originator of giving a gift that continues to give—anybody who's ever been saved for any length of time, if you ever come to know the Lord, really come to know Him, and He lives with you and you follow after Him, and you can hear His voice when he makes His call, if you've ever known the Lord, it only takes a moment or two to take you back to a time when you did not. When you back to the time when you were not, and you compare that time with the time that you do, you realize that, "This time that I do, yes, the Lord has given me things that I didn't have before, and in this life that I live with Him, He continues to give unto me. That is the originator of the gift that keeps on giving. I know, for myself, I can say that He gave me Grace, mercy, salvation; He gave me joy 31 years ago, and it has not been any of those—I've had some gifts that I outgrew. You know what I mean? And I'm not just talking about clothes. I had some clothes that I outgrew, and I've had many gifts that, they were wonderful at the time, but, over time, they lose—they have a term for it in marketing, they call it diminishing utility. Initial utility is high—I can really use this gift, but, over time, it diminishes more and more. But the Lord gives a gift that always has great utility. So, for the years that anybody that has been saved for any length of time, you know that God continues to give, even through the same gifts that He gives. A friend of mine, he says, "You know, I understand that whole salvation, and washing away your sins, and being a Christian thing. I understand that; it's no big hullabaloo, big deal about the whole thing." But, anyway, if anyone was able to say that I was, you know, being a goody-two-shoes, well, that goes with being a Christian, you know, a Christian goody-two-shoes, and it's no big deal, being a goody-two-shoes now; I was never that big of a sinner, anyway. If anybody ever says, you know, "It's no big deal! Eventually, I'll get around to it, because it doesn't make so much of a difference. I'll do all the stuff now, and then, later on, once, you know, I get old, then I won't have that; it'll be great then. I'll be sewing everything else in the meantime." The truth of the matter is, "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23) Not sins; sin is death. It doesn't matter—in society's eyes, we could be really good people, in society's eyes, but, in the Almighty who ever was we don't have anything to stand in His presence with. In His eyes, we can't even open our mouths before His brilliance of righteousness. Therefore, the first gift, the greatest gift of His only begotten Son, which He gave from the foundation of the world. That gift that he gave, yes, is still giving God's power.

I had a little something to say. Somebody actually told me, they said, "You can boil down your whole Christianity down real simple, because, Parrish, all you really got to make sure you do is believe a little bit, and make sure your good outweighs your bad." That was a bit of a challenge, because I'd heard that before, but I'd never had that thrown at me before. I had the opportunity to work with the youth

group, sometimes ago, and we went down to the Oriental Institute Museum. It was great. I actually thought it was going to be about Asian dynasties. I thought it was going to be about that, but, no, it was about the orientation of the world. I've told this a time or two before, but I like to tell it again. As we went down there, we saw the kingdoms of the very first kingdom. We saw the kingdom—some of the representations of Babylon, Mesopotamia, we saw Syria, and their Persian kingdoms and how the different things in their mindsets were. We went to another place, we actually saw—they had a Rosetta stone and the engravings on it were used for the language. It had the alphabet on it, per se, and they had that, and they would use those things to communicate, and, when they didn't know what something meant, they would go back to the stone and see what that image meant, and that was how they had written language. Amongst many things that we saw, was in Egypt—Egypt, now think about it, Egypt was some 4500 to 5000 years ago—Egypt. Now, in this time, they had several guys. We've all heard of Ra, and Isis—they had a children's cartoon thing, and that was cute, but one of the things that they had was the god, Horus, who was the god of the underworld. And, he sat on the little chair, there, and he was sitting on his little chair, and he had his servants by him, and then there was a scale, in front of him a ways. On the other side of the scale was a man. On the scales was, a feather on scale, and on the other scale was that same man's heart. So, the implication was that they would be okay as long as the goodness in that man's heart out-weighed his badness before Horus. So, when you hear somebody say that you're going to be okay as long as your good outweighs your bad, that is a five-thousand year-old lie. They don't even know, and it's been circulating around, because, without the judgment of God, what do you know? So, my point is, there is only one true salvation. One true salvation, and we want to talk about the nature of God's salvation. The Bible says they are new every morning.

Lamentations 3:22-23 *It is after LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.*

It is after LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion, his compassion fails not. For they are new—hallelujah!—new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The blood from Calvary's mountain—now we understand this—the blood from Calvary's mountain—“what are you talking about the blood in December, Parrish Lee? Don't you know December is the Christmas month? The Blood is the Easter month? You're getting your holidays all mixed up!” No I'm not! No I'm not; this is part of the same message. You see, the blood that flows from Calvary's mountain, it isn't just a cupful, and it wasn't just a bowlful. You see, Saints, it wasn't even a lake or an ocean-full of love. The blood that flows from Calvary's mountain flows yet still. And it doesn't just flow by a small measure, it flows enough to cover; it flows enough to cover whatever we have gotten ourselves into. Wherever we want to find ourselves, it flows to the lowest valley and it reaches—that's what the song says—it reaches to the highest—and that's a fact! Wherever you go, we have in our blood the flow from Calvary's mountain. In fact, it needs to keep flowing. It actually needs to keep flowing, because some of us need the blood of Calvary to cover the sins that I did yesterday. I needed it to cover my crazy thoughts and even my sins that I might have done today! That, if I commit some later on tonight, I need it for that. I need it to cover every aspect of my life. I need it to continue to flow, and that is the blood that continues to flow, being the gift that continues to give. “Oh, how precious is that flow that makes me white as snow, no other fount I know—nothing but the blood of Jesus.”

Part 2: He Gave Gifts to Man

Ephesians 4:8 *Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.*

He gave gifts unto man. I have heard it said that He-is the God of a second chance. You know, when you blew your first chance, a second chance sounds real good. But, I only partially, partially agree with that – because, the fact of the matter is, some of us have blown our second chances. So, I have to say He is the God of ANOTHER chance. He's the God that, after I've blown my second and third and 20th and 50th chances, after I've messed up and messed around and I can't even see what's up or down, He is the God of another chance. Hallelujah! A chance that goes beyond what my little mind is wrapped around. Many of us know that, where in the world have we found ourselves that the blood hasn't been able to reach us? David said it most of all, when he was talking, he said, "Where shall I go to hide away from Thee, oh Lord? Because, if I ascend into the heavens, thou art there, or if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art altogether there, also." (Psalms 139:7-8) There's no place to go to be able get away from God, which is why, even in the belly of a whale, you can only make your cry, and God can deliver you. Knowing this, that no matter what state we're in, no matter where we find ourselves; knowing this, it's no wonder why the angels would surround the hillside in a whole multitude and sing songs. It's no wonder why they would shout out to the shepherds in the field, "Good tidings to man; peace and joy and goodwill towards men, because unto you, this day, is born in the city of Bethlehem, which is Christ the Lord. No wonder they would come and sing about Him, because they see, "You guys have an eternal gift with you." And it's no wonder that, after knowing how good this chance was, that is has made a difference, that the shepherds aid, "Hey, let us go and see what these angels are talking about," because that gist is that special. And, it's no wonder that, even after the shepherds went, that Simeon would come over, and just hold the child and lift up his eyes to Heaven, and say, "now I can go, oh great God, for I have seen Your salvation." And while Anna went and said, "Now everybody know that this child is given for the redemption of many. No wonder they were making a big deal about this gift, this second chance. You see, the first one, they might have gotten things a little bit going.

You see, the bible says that the wise men brought Him gifts of gold, and frankincense and myrrh, and they had their places, but the truth of the matter is, wise men still bring Him gifts. But, those gifts had their places as they brought them to the Lord, but the true thing was what He was going to turn around and bring to everyone else. The Bible goes on to say that He gave gifts to man. He gave gifts; not just one. Not just one. So, we could say, "Well, what manner of gifts are they going to be, these gifts?" Gifts of prophecy, gifts of healing, maybe the gifts of being able to speak with tongues, great gifts of discerning? Yes, absolutely. Gifts of encouragement? Yes, absolutely, all of the above, and *more*. They are the gifts of, when I find myself in despair, being able to pull me out. They are the gifts of, when I need some help, and nobody seems to understand me, God has a gift for that. They are the gifts of, when you find yourself all alone and lonely, God has a gift for that.

I had the opportunity, when I was in Baltimore, recently—I've been trying to make videos of elderly people in the family, so that we can have some sort of record, and, you know, have that sort of thing for the family. Sounds real great, and, but there's one thing, as I interview more and more elderly people, they say, "More and more people are dying from my time period. It seems like I don't have people to talk—I mean, I can talk to people, but I want to talk about the things that are special, and important, and relevant to me. I want to talk to them about where we came from, and what we did when we were coming up, but, now, people, they don't seem to be able to relate to that, because most of those people are dying off. If I could have something that would really help me, I'd like to have me a couple of friends who would know what I'm talking about." I thought, "Wow." I interviewed a few more people, trying to, and the middle aged-people, I found one concern, and that was just broken marriages. Either there was divorce, or there was estrangement; in some cases there was widowhood, and saying, "You know, I just need some companionship. Not necessarily talking about getting married gain, but just somebody to fill the void in my life." I listened to it, and we talked, and we prayed, and we would have more and more family gatherings, and they would just voice that, but they weren't the only ones that would talk about

having needs. I have many brothers and sisters, so, obviously, I have many nieces and nephews—it's approaching forty, actually. And, as I talked to the young people, they also had a common thread that they shared, they said, "You know, I just want to talk. I just want to be encouraged when I'm talking, because it seems like the older people in our family, they think they've got it all figured out, and they don't want to listen to us. So, I would like to be recognized that what I say is also relevant and important." And, in hearing all these needs, I said, "Lord, please, what and how, how will You minister to all these people, because I sure don't have a clue?" And God would say, "Yeah, with man, this kind of thing is impossible, but, with Me, all things are possible. Cast your cares on Me." And we would, and you would see, one by one, two by two, more and more, God opening up door, softening up hearts, as we would lay them before the Lord, He would minister unto His people. When we turned it over to Him, God would make miracles happen. Miracles happen.

So, no matter what the need is, "You know, I need a better opportunity at work," He gave gifts to man. You know what I mean? "I need a healing." The Bible says He gave gifts unto man. "You know what I need from You, Almighty God? I need You to make a way out of no way, because I don't even know how I got myself in this crazy situation. Maybe I opened my mouth when I shouldn't have. Maybe I—whatever I did, God, I can't even figure a way out!" The Bible says He gave gifts unto man.

So, in closing, as we prepare to close, here:

1 Corinthians 12:31 *But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.*

Oh sure, you might want to start with the gifts that were given to Him but we move beyond that, Saints of God, we move beyond the whole Christmas-day thing, and we move to the after Christmas. And, as we move to the after-Christmas, we see that, no question about it, the most important gift that the Lord gave, was the gift of eternal life—but we have to finish with the temporary life before we have the eternal life. As we go through the temporary life, we see that, how comforting would it be if we had to wait our 70, 80, 90, 100 years before we were able to see all the blessings of His precious love, of His precious presence, Him being able to do things for us. That wouldn't be a great comfort at all. The Bible says that we have these treasures that He gives us, but they're in earthen vessels. So, what comfort would it be? None at all, but the Bible says He gave gifts unto man. The most precious gift, the most important gift is love. Now, our first message that we started off with in 2014 was, "It Starts With Love," and, here we are, finishing the year by saying, again, the most important gift that He gave, even in this day, is love.

Amen. Give the Lord a praise.