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Winter 2024-25
Looking Forward to Christmas

Sermon Title: Christmas Gives to Us the Gift of God Himself

To be used with session 5: Looking Forward in Worship

Scripture: Philippians 2:5-11

Connection with Bible Study: This sermon complements the Bible study “Looking Forward in Worship” by taking a deep look into what really happened at Christmas. The fact that God Himself came to earth in human flesh is cause for complete worship of Jesus Christ as Lord of all.

Introduction

Think back. What was the very best Christmas present you ever received? Maybe that bicycle as a kid. Or the keys to a new car. Maybe it was that first car from your parents. Perhaps it was tickets to a long-anticipated concert. Maybe it was an engagement ring or some other treasured piece of jewelry.

As followers of Christ, the greatest gift we ever received at Christmas was the gift of God Himself. Centuries ago, God Himself came to earth at Bethlehem. Before the creation of the world, God looked down through history and saw the havoc that disobedience and wickedness would let loose on the world. In mercy and grace God decided to do something about the problem. God said, “I’ll go Myself and deal with the sin problem that has alienated my created world from Me.” And so, Jesus—the Son of God and God the Son—left heaven’s glory and came to this earth to break down the barrier that separated humanity from God the Father.

What we are talking about is the doctrine of the incarnation. The word incarnation comes from Latin, and it simply means “taking flesh.” It is a doctrine that speaks of God entering this world and taking on the flesh and blood of humanity. Keep in mind, of course, that when the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah, took on flesh and blood, He did not cease being God. Jesus was fully God and fully man. Philippians 2 speaks in greater detail of the incarnation.

1. What God the Son gave up for us (Phil. 2:5-5-6).

The Apostle Paul began his explanation of the incarnation with an urgent request for the Christians in Philippi to adopt the same attitude seen in Jesus Christ. What was that attitude? It was an incredible attitude of humility. As Paul unpacked what that request meant, he gave to us one of the deepest insights into incarnation.

Paul listed for us all that Jesus the Son gave up when He came to be our Savior. Paul said that Jesus had existed from all eternity in the “form” of God. That is, Jesus by nature always has

been God, equal with the Father. And He will always be God for all of eternity to come. Jesus, however, realized the desperate need of humanity for a Savior. Out of that realization He refused to hold onto His rights and prerogatives as God. Instead, He freely gave those things up that He might meet our need for forgiveness and reconciliation to God the Father.

Remember, Paul was challenging his readers to adopt the attitude of Jesus in their relationship with others. As His followers, we are to be quick to consider the needs of others and be willing to incur a little cost and discomfort to address the hurts and needs of others.

2. What God the Son did for us (Phil. 2:7-8).

Giving up His divine privileges was one thing. It was big thing, but what He did next was even bigger. Jesus laid aside whatever benefit was His because of His divine nature and willingly suffered humiliation by putting on humanity. And He put on flesh and bone for one purpose, and for one purpose only. “He became obedient to the Father” and the Father’s will by voluntarily dying on the cross for the sin of the world. Remember, sin must be punished by death. “The wages of sin is death.” “The soul that sins must die.” Someone had to pay the penalty for all that you have done wrong, all that I have done wrong. Either you and I pay for our wrongdoings with our own death, or someone else must pay for it. That’s what Jesus did for us. He willingly laid down His life for us.

Remember, the incarnation is all about God saying, “I’ll do it for you. I’ll come to earth and take your punishment upon Myself that you might have the gift of eternal life.” That’s what God the Son did for us.

3. What God the Son Is due (Phil. 2:9-11).

Because of all that Jesus gave up for us and because of all that Jesus did for us, He is due praise and adoration, now and for all of eternity. He is to be exalted in our lives, in our world, and throughout the universe. Paul pictured the day when that would take place. Jesus Christ will be worshipped by all—every knee, every tongue in heaven, on earth, and under the earth—and all will acknowledge the eternal truth that Jesus Christ is sovereign Lord over everything. All of this praise, worship, and exaltation of Jesus Christ will ultimately bring glory to God the Father.

What a day that will be! But why wait? Why wait until eternity begins to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord? We should make that a regular part of everyday where we start the day and finish the day by acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord. We should daily give glory to God for all He has done for us in Christ. We must give Him the praise that is due His Holy name.

Conclusion

Imagine waking up on Christmas morning and finding the most beautifully wrapped present you’ve ever seen under the tree with your name on it. After you squeeze it and shake it, you finally get around to unwrapping the package. And when you get it open, you discover that it is the most fantastic, the most exotic, the most useful, the most extravagant, the most valuable present the world has ever imagined, and it’s all yours! It’s yours to keep forever! Can you

imagine how awesome that would be? That is what Christmas is all about. God's greatest gift to you is simply this: God gave Himself at Christmas so that you might have life eternal!

*Dr. Sam Crouch is retired from 52 years in ministry, but currently serves as a part-time pastor. Sam was educated at Baylor University and Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife live in Tucson, Arizona. He is the author of the book *Clearing the Fog: Gaining an Understanding and Appreciation of the Old Testament*.*