

GOD'S CHRISTMAS TREE

Introduction:

- Discuss Christmas trees - where we get them, decorations, presents, etc...
- Discuss the meaning of Christmas to a Christian.
 - The Son of God became the babe in the **cradle** (wood), that He might become the man of the **cross** (wood), that He might die as our sinless substitute to release us from the penalty of sin, and reconcile us to God that we might receive eternal life - and all this as a gift by faith in Christ.
- Simply put, the **Cross** is God's Christmas Tree.
 - N.T. word "stauros" means an upright pale or stake (of wood) and is the word used for the crosses the Romans used in crucifixion.
 - The cross has become a symbol of what God and His Son did on the cross as the christmas tree is one of the many symbols of Christmas.
 - God's Christmas Tree, however, has no decorations as ours do.
- Just how do we get God's Christmas Tree?

I. HOW TO GET GOD'S CHRISTMAS TREE

- *"Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat, Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost." (Isa. 55:1)*
- *Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." (Jn. 4:10)*
- *He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life." (Rev.21:6)*
- *And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come." And let the one who hears say, "Come." And let the one who is thirsty come. Let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost. (Rev. 22:17)*

1. God's Tree is a Gift of God.

- *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. **not as a results of works, that no one should boast.** (Eph. 2:8-9)*
- "Grace" is "unmerited favor" thus salvation (God's tree) is a **free gift**.
 - God's gift is free to us, but not without cost.
- **God's Christmas Tree, or Salvation in Christ is free, but it is not cheap.** It cost God the death of His very own Son, the Lord Jesus.
- Grace is not grace if it is not free. Cheap is something at a discount price. Free on the other hand doesn't cost and cannot be purchased - something we get as a **gift**.
- So, how do we receive this gift of all gifts without cost?

2. God's Tree is Acquired Through Faith

- *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God, even to those who believe on His name." (Jn. 1:12)*
- Remember, it cannot be purchased or deserved, borrowed or duplicated. There is only one and only God can give it away - and only to those who believe in His Son, Jesus.

II. THERE ARE GIFTS UNDER GOD'S TREE

- **Romans 5:1 - 11**

Let us look at just a **few** of the countless gifts God has under His Christmas Tree:

1. The Gift of Justification (5:1)

- The divine pronouncement by God that we are acquitted from the penalty of sin even though we are sinners. God declares that we are righteous, even though we still have a sinful nature.

2. The Gift of Peace With God (5:1)

- "Peace with God" means reconciled to God. The barriers that separated us from God have been removed by what took place on God's Christmas Tree.

3. The Gift of Access to God (5:2a)

- Through Christ, we have direct access to God as believers. All other religions shut man out from God because they turn people away from Jesus and Jesus has said: ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except by me."*** (Jn. 14:6)

4. The Gift of Hope of the Glory of God (5:2)

- ***"Christ in you, the hope of glory."*** Hope means confident, a sure expectation, or some thing hoped for.

- Glory is that awesome character and beauty of God's divine essence and all the beauty that surrounds Him.

- We can confidently expect to be able to share in God's character as we grow in the Lord and experience more and more of His life in ours.

- We can be confident that one day we shall experience ultimate redemption that of being in God's glorious kingdom he is preparing for us in our resurrected bodies without the old sinful nature and Satan's attacks.

5. The Gift of Triumph in Tribulation and Trouble (5:3-4)

- We have the God given capacity to rejoice in our sufferings through faith, the Bible and our walk with the Lord.

- Sadly, however, too many have put this gift on a shelf and forgotten it. We often fail to use this gift in the midst of troubles and difficulties and we have forgotten that we are only passing through this world, we are aliens, this is not our true, real home.

6. The Gift of the Love of God and the Holy Spirit (5:5)

- ***"By this the love of God was manifested in (among) us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*** (1 Jn. 4:9-10)

- Grasping God's love so that it gives assurance and removes fear, doubt or shame, when we fail, giving significance and meaning to life, is the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Again, we too often, put this two gifts on the shelf by failing to study God Word (His instruction book). We quench and grieve the Holy Spirit by ignoring God's Word and turning to our own solutions and plans for life.

7. The Gift of Deliverance From Wrath (5:9)

- Those of us who have put our trust in God's Son Jesus Christ, will not come into judgment or face God's wrath because Jesus Christ, our Savior, took God's judgment in our place.

8. The Gift of Salvation by His Life (5:10)

- We are also delivered from the power of sin and can live abundantly and victoriously over life dominating things through the power of the risen Christ. Paul said:

"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." (Gal. 2:20)

- Can you say this same thing that Paul said long ago?

9. The Gift of Rejoicing (5:11)

- Exult means to boast in the sense of joyous confidence. It is looking away from ones self to God and glories in God's grace.

- It is a rejoicing which expresses a bold confidence, not on our record or behavior, but on being reconciled (peace with God) by the **finished** work of Jesus Christ.

- A reminder, there is only one means of reconciliation to God and that is Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION:

1. Because of God's Christmas Tree, we can boast in God, in the assurance of eternity, and of his constant love, not because of what or who we are in ourselves, but because of what and who we are in Jesus Christ by His grace.

2. When we unwrap these presents we find them backed up by the faithfulness and guarantee of God Himself through the perfect and finished work of Christ.

3. These gifts never break and never wear out. The last for eternity and they do all that is promised and even more.

4. As you look at your Christmas tree from now on, I hope it will remind you that God also has a Christmas Tree and everybody can have it plus the countless gifts that go with it. But it can be had only on God's conditions.