



The Greatest Gift

As we approach Christmas Day, let's spend some time this week thinking about what the greatest gift might be...

Day 1 // Riches

“And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Matthew 2:11 (KJV)

The wise men brought Jesus gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Expensive gifts, gifts fit for a king. As Jesus laid there He knew who He was. He was the Son of God. Called for a Purpose. Chosen to be the Saviour of the world.

The valuable gifts He received didn't make Him any more significant or important in the eyes of His Heavenly Father. Jesus knew who He was. He knew whose He was. He was a child of God.

Today, remind yourself that you too are precious. Gifts and riches do not increase your worth. You are a child of God, created in His image. This week remember God gave the ultimate, priceless gift - His son Jesus Christ, so that you could have a personal relationship with Him.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank You for loving me. Thank you for reminding me today I am precious to You. You paid the ultimate price because You wanted a relationship with me. Help me today to know my worth in Your eyes. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Day 2 // Good Health

In a year where the health of the world has been compromised. Let's think about what the gift of health would look like this Christmas.

Is good health not spending Christmas in hospital? Is good health being able to stand up unaided and walk? Is it being pain free?

Working as a hospital Chaplain, I often come across people who are feeling extremely low because of their health situations. I remember visiting someone who had suffered a stroke. Their speech was gone and they were only able to nod or shake their head to communicate.

Tears rolled down their eyes. I said, "we will pray that your speech will come back." I began to pray quoting the Bible verse below:

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6-7

I continued to thank God that they were able to communicate by nodding and shaking their head. I thanked God for the movement they did have. And I prayed that their speech and mobility would return. I prayed for God to meet with them through this time and give them peace.

The gift of Jesus Christ who came from heaven to earth, returned to heaven. We too, when our time is over will be raised to life in new bodies and dwell in heaven.

It is the same way with the resurrection of the dead. Our earthly bodies are planted in the ground when we die, but they will be raised to live forever. Our bodies are buried in brokenness, but they will be raised in glory. They are buried in weakness, but they will be raised in strength. They are buried as natural human bodies, but they will be raised as spiritual bodies. For just as there are natural bodies, there are also spiritual bodies.

1 Corinthians 15:42-44

Health is a wonderful gift for Christmas, but for those who are struggling with health issues this Christmas, remember, this life is temporal. Heaven is eternal.

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 8:18

God has not forgotten you. He sees you and He has promised a life free from pain, tears and suffering with Him.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for always being there with me through every situation and struggle I face. Lord this Christmas may I know Your peace that surpasses all understanding. Give me strength for today and hope for tomorrow. Amen.

Day 3 // Forgiveness

Forgiveness is a strange gift to have on the Christmas list! But it is so important. As you read this devotional, maybe the country is in lockdown with rules stipulating it is illegal to gather with people outside of your household.

For some, that rule may not change what their Christmas plans look like because there are rifts in families, broken relationships and unforgiveness which means families and friends choose not to be together at Christmas.

As we reflect on the past year, many of us have re-evaluated our lives and thought about the things which are important to us. It's not until you are told you can't do something that you realise how much you miss it.

If you have relationships which are broken around you, make every effort this week to restore them.

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:19-21

This Christmas overcome evil with good. Release those who have hurt you. Reach out and be a peacemaker in your home, with your family and your relationships.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for sending Jesus to die for my sins that I may know Your forgiveness. Help me to forgive others just as You have forgiven me. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Day 4 // Time

Rush, rush, rush. Christmas can be the busiest time of the year as people cram in extra shopping, wrapping, cooking, cleaning, decorating the house and putting up the tree. Every year we talk about how much Christmas has become commercialised.

Well, this year, do something different. STOP.

Take time out to breathe. Spend time with those you love and just listen. Listen to them talk, laugh, cry. Really listen. Not while you are preparing a meal or checking out your Facebook feeds. Take time to spend with those who matter.

Most importantly, spend time with God. He is never too busy for you. Make time to spend listening to what God is saying to you this Christmas. When you spend time in God's presence you will find rest and peace.

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Matthew 6:6

“Truly my soul finds rest in God. My Salvation comes from him.”

Psalms 62:1

Prayer: God of all peace, this Christmas may I take time to spend with You and listen to what You want to say to me. Help me to take time to be with those I love and listen to them; being fully present in each moment You give us. In Jesus Name I pray. Amen

Day 5 // Love

Whitney Houston's famous song "The Greatest Love Of All", contained the words: 'The greatest love of all, is easy to achieve. Learning to love yourself. It is the greatest love of all'

As Christians we believe, the greatest love of all is found only in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son. That whosoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

Love is the greatest of all gifts. It reflects God's character. It forms the two most important commandments.

"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:36-40

This Christmas receive God's gift of love to you and share His love with others. Merry Christmas!

Prayer: Father God, thank you for sending our son Jesus Christ to the earth to die for my sins. I thank you for Your unconditional love for me. Lord I receive Your love and forgiveness afresh today. Teach me Lord, to love others like You. Help me to bring Your love, hope and peace to many this Christmas. Amen