

The Gifts of Christmas: Gift of Expectation

Advent Means Arrival

Eddie gets Advent. He might not realize it, but he does. Advent means “arrival.”

Luke 2:10-12 - God the Father planned for the gift of his one and only Son to be found by those who would seek him.

Verse 10 - this gift from the Heavenly Father was good news for “all the people.”

The shepherd’s expectancy in this advent of the Savior who had been born caused them to seek him.

A WILD GOOSE CHASE?

“So, they hurried off and located Mary and Joseph, and found the baby lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:16

God never leads those He loves on a wild goose chase. Instead, God desires for His children seek, find, and experience the full measure of His good and perfect gifts. He wanted the gift of His son, Jesus, to be found in the manger. He wanted the Savior of the world to be worshiped and adored. And He wants all people to know that this gift, as with all good gifts, come straight from His hand.

James 1:17 - *All generous giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or the slightest hint of change.*

God is called the “Father of Lights.” This name describes God for his unique creative ability to design the heavens, the stars, the sun, and the moon that shine and reflect his creative beauty in the sky.

Ever since that good gift of light given by the Father of lights on Day 1, our Heavenly Father consistently has been giving good gifts to his creation. This act of giving good gifts is part of the nature and character of our Heavenly Father. One of the most natural things for a good dad to do for his kids is to give them what they need. That picture is how Jesus helped people to understand who God is: he is a good dad who gives good gifts to his kids. Matthew 7:9-11

One of the greatest and clearest demonstrations of this part of God’s nature and character as a good giver of gifts is what John talks about in chapter 3 verses 16 to 21.

The nature and character of the Father of Lights is that he is a giver of good gifts. He loved the world. He loved us! And he demonstrated how much he loved us by resorting to his nature and character as a giver of good and perfect gifts that come down from his hand. He gave his one and only Son named Jesus who was born of a virgin in a manger in Bethlehem as the Savior for the whole world. That is good news. We are instructed to go and tell people everywhere! Jesus Christ has been born! Yes, he has been born in the manger in Bethlehem. But he longs to be born in the hearts and lives of each person in this world that God so loves.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD

This Savior of the whole world also is known as the light of the world - John 8:12.

Jesus, the light of the world, came into the world to drive out the darkness. On that first Christmas night in Bethlehem, God the Father gave the gift we read about on Day 1 of Creation: light. Let there be light. Let there be the light of the world. Let the light of Jesus

Christ, the Savior and Messiah of the whole world, come into this dark place and provide not only light, but also hope, love, joy, and peace because of his advent; because of his arrival.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF HIDE AND SEEK

How can a person come back home to God the Father when they may be feeling far away from him or like they are living in a dark place in their life?

Jeremiah 29:13 - *You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.*

Nearly 600 years before the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, God banished His disobedient people, the Israelites, to a foreign land after they had been defeated by their enemies, uprooted from their homes and familiar surroundings, and made to live in land that felt oppressive, lonely, and dark. And even though they felt abandoned and far away from God in a dark place in their story, God sends the prophet, Jeremiah with good news to these people. Jeremiah 29:11

Those words that Jeremiah spoke from God to his people were a gift filled with great expectancy that brought great hope to his people who needed such a good gift in that season of life.

Jesus also talks about seeking God in Matthew 7:7-8.

Once again, the gift of expectancy with hope, is given to those who will seek God with all their heart. Ask. Seek. Knock. This is an invitation to know not only the answer to a question, but also the Heavenly Father himself. Such a gift comes with the expectancy and hope of moving from a dark place into a place of light found in Christ. It is an invitation to an arrival, an advent.

Jesus does not want to stay wrapped up at the baby in the manger. He wants to be found by each one of us and unwrapped in a fresh way this Christmas. Are we willing to see it differently this season? Are we willing to seek Jesus with joy instead of obligation? If you seek Him with all your heart, you will find Him.

THIS CHRISTMAS?

What does God want for Christmas?

First, He wants you. Remember the passage from John 3:16-21? He longs to be born in the hearts and lives of each person in this world that God so loves.

Second, there are people who have an empty space in their Nativity. Maybe they lost a piece or maybe it was broken because someone treated it carelessly. Perhaps what God wants from us this Christmas is for us to help fill in those empty spaces.