

Daily Devotional, December 9, 2020 The Gift of Giving Your All

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Philippians 2:1–8 (NIV)

I suppose it can be easy to become cynical about gift giving this time of year. I hear people complain all the time about, how expensive and materialistic it is. They talk about how we need to get back to the roots of Christmas and spend the night in barns or something like that.

I'll admit, there is some truth to that. We do talk about gifts this time of year more than we talk about Jesus. That may be problematic, but on the flip side, I find we are also more generous.

The most amazing part of the Christmas season is generosity. Maybe I look at the world through rose-colored glasses this time of year, but I believe that people are more giving at Christmas than at any other time of year. And it's not just those who call themselves Christians. I think everyone is more mindful of sharing from the abundance they have, which is remarkable in itself to think about. Even non-believers in Christ give more this time of year.

We spend hours thinking about things we can do for the people we love. We spend days trying to make them happy or bringing them some kind of joy. I love that. Not only are we more generous, but the entire season gets us thinking about ways we can use our resources to bring joy to others.

I think it is a great way to honor the birth of our savior. His life was that. He spent every moment working towards a sacrificial gift that would benefit those He loved the most: us. He gave us everything He had. When you think about it, the very thing we celebrate, the birth of Christ, was also our first Christmas gift. God Gave us his son.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

This is not a justification for materialism. (I see you, cynics.) It's a reason to give generously, to love generously, and to live generously. I hope that, this year and in the next, you will live more generous lives and that you will be like Paul describes to Timothy: "rich in good deeds" (1 Timothy 6:17–19). I cannot think of a better way for God's people to celebrate.

O Lord, my God, through your Son Jesus, you showed us what it means to walk in faith. With this belief in You comes generosity, which is planted like a seed in all who are Christians. Lord, teach me to give in trust of Your word. Help me to believe in your promise of your coming kingdom. Help me to walk with conviction and with total devotion to you, doing nothing out of compulsion but letting generosity flow forth naturally from the new heart you have given me through the giving of Your Son. Amen.