

## Sermon for December 3, 2017 “A Few Christmas Gifts for You”

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

What to give someone for Christmas. I have started my Christmas shopping, and it is the same thing every year. What do I get each person on my list for Christmas? Finding the right gift is difficult. There are a lot of things that need to be taken into account.

What do they like and what are their interests? I know that if it is shoes or books, Mary will like it. If it has anything to do with music or Disney, Kaitlyn will like it. So, I have to consider each person's interests, but also their needs. What can I give that person that they really need?

And of course, there are the costs. I can't very well obtain something, as wonderful a gift as it may be, if I can't afford it. And it just makes sense to try to get the best for my money. So once I find something, I try to get it on sale.

Having taken all these things into consideration, I have a few Christmas presents for you. I didn't find them at the mall. They don't even carry them at Wal-Mart or Target. You can't put them on lay away at Best Buy either. They can't even find these on Amazon.com! And the best thing is that they are invaluable. You all need them and I won't tell you that they were free, but I didn't spend much for them. And I found them all in one place: 1st Corinthians 1:3-9.

The first of these gifts is grace. Grace is the unmerited unearned favor of God. We all need it. I mean without it none of us would have a chance. It is only by the grace of God that we are saved. It is by the grace of God that we are able to know forgiveness and have a relationship with our Heavenly Father.

And you have to admit the cost is affordable. Grace is a free gift. Not that it is cheap or worthless. In fact it is very costly. Jesus gave his very life to pay for it. So God can offer it to us free of charge.

So my first Christmas gift to you is grace. You don't have to wait until Christmas morning to open it. It is here now. Take it - it is yours. Merry Christmas.

The second Christmas gift I have for you is peace. The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. The idea is not just an absence of violence. It means wholeness and health. Not just physical health but spiritual and emotional. To have that peace that passeth understanding is a gift of faith. It is to be whole spiritually and emotionally.

You have to admit that everyone needs that. Especially in our world today. Very few people are at peace. Most are full of anxieties and worries. And they are hardly whole and healthy. Most people are emotionally and spiritually incomplete and soul sick!

And once again you can't beat the price. Peace in this sense is priceless. But once again Jesus had already paid the price. So, to us this priceless gift is free.

The third Christmas gift I have for you is what Paul called "the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." It is a relationship with Jesus the Son of God. This is something that we all need. Without it we are lost and without hope. Our earthly friends can betray and deny us, but Jesus will always be there for us night and day; rain or shine.

And again, the price was great. I didn't even need use a credit card to purchase it. Don't misunderstand; this gift is more valuable than all the gold in Fort Knox. Even Bill Gates couldn't afford to buy this with his billions.

I was able to get it because it was already paid for. And so I offer it to you. Merry Christmas.

But there is a problem with these gifts. I am sure they all fit. One size fits all you know. I know what I forgot. The first rule of gift giving. Does the person already have the thing you want to give? If they already have one, then you should find something else that they don't already have.

I think that you all have grace and peace and fellowship with Jesus. They have already been given to us by God. That is what Paul is saying here in 1 Corinthians. He is giving thanks for the gifts God has already given the Corinthians. In fact, every Christian has these things simply by virtue of believing in Jesus. We have grace, we have peace, and we have a relationship with Jesus our Savior.

That is what Christmas is all about. God gave us Jesus, the Prince of Peace, wrapped in grace. How silly of me to think that I should give you these things as Christmas presents. I mean you already have them .... Don't you? If you haven't accepted grace and peace and a relationship with Jesus, then please accept these Christmas gifts.

But I am pretty sure that most of you have already received these gifts before. Well what am I going to do with all these gifts? I know, you may have them already, but there are a lot of people in our world who need them! They lack these basic and important things! They desperately need grace, peace, and fellowship with Jesus! Here take them anyway, and when you find someone without grace or peace or a relationship with Jesus, give it to them! You have my permission to re-gift them!