

## **What God Wants For Christmas**

### **Intro - Where I'm going**

Christmas gifts....lesson on gifting....Brenda

The perfect gift for the person that has it all

What Gods Word has to offer on the subject...

Text today is from Micah 6:6-8.....first.....

### **Ready for Christmas.....Gifts**

- 1) Question....Are you ready for Christmas? Eleven days! - Tired of being asked??
- 2) Shopping done yet?....GP busy!
- 3) Instead of GP....do you hand craft? wood work, crafts, sewing, baking
- 4) Either way = giving gifts.....

### **The not so perfect gift**

#### 1) The not so perfect gift

- 1a) Doesn't fit...wrong color...broken in the box...already had one...  
doesn't match what they already have...they don't like it!

#### 2) The not so perfect response for the nor so perfect gift

- 2a) What they say.....“Do you really like it?” ....“Like it?...I love it.”

- 2b) Facial expressions.....eye rolling, frowns and scowling, tears of frustration  
or sorrow...

- 2c) Actions....purposely leaving the gift behind the couch, tossing it in the trash, kicking  
screaming temper tantrum...(not just kids)

- 2d) Re-gifting.....concrete answer.....not happy give it to someone else

### **The perfect gift**

#### 3) The perfect gift.....

- 3a) Does fit.....right color....not broken.....they don't already have it...

it does match what they have.....they do really like it!

4) The perfect response for the perfect gift

4a) What they say....

4b) Whats on their face....

4c) What actions does the body do.....

4d) So perfect.....others to feel the joy.....Re-gift it!

### **The gift for person who has it all**

1) "What do you give the person that has everything?".....exotic cologne made from poison ivy.....three-volume "History of Nigeria".....25 year subscription to golf digest magazine

2) Do you have a friend like that...have everything....if they don't have it, you can't afford it anyway....

3) At this point would you wonder what the purpose of that gift is.....?

3a) Purpose.....Quality ?....no they have the best

3b) Purpose.....Quantity ?....no they have the most

3c) Maybe some other reason exists.....???

4) Different angle.... Jesus....Birthday .....what can I give him.....has it all right?

4a) (Hebrews 1:2) the Creator of all ....(Colossians 1:17) the one who holds all things together.

4b) What do you give.....no wondering.....Jesus wish list.....check the Word!

### **Prophet Micah**

1) Answer....Micah....Micah was a prophet.....Old Testament....Minor Prophets....wrote short but important...

2) God gave Micah a message for his generation.....our generation.

3) Micah....700 years BC....country boy....Moresheth....outside Jerusalem....

4) Scholars.....same time Isaiah and Hosea....good friends.....wrote sound very similar.

5) Micah's Character.....blunt, direct, plain-spoken, no-nonsense.....loved the common man and hated corrupt religious and political leaders.....taking advantage of position and people.

## **A World Like Ours**

Three phrases describe the situation of those days:

1) International Tension.

1a) Israel...three warring nations....Assyria-Egypt-Philistines....greater threat-Assyrians....exacted tribute from Israel.....exchange for peace....voluntary national slavery.

2) Religious Corruption.

2a) Micah....priests taking bribes....telling people whatever they wanted to hear....leaders on the take.

3) Moral Chaos.

3a) Fallout of IT and RC....every man for himself.....rich vs poor....leaders taking bribes....trust issues Leaders-Merchants-Family

4) 3 phrases.....apparent things not different than today.....Micah 2014.....the message sounds as if the prophet has been reading CTV news

5) Micah wrote to a world facing huge problems.....wrote condemning the sin and hypocrisy.....rampant among God's people.....warning!.....red-light and buzzer...chopper story?

6) BUT.....delightful passage of Scripture.....only 3 verses long.....what God wants from us for Christmas this year.

*Read Micah 6:6-8*

## **The Wrong Answer      Verses 6-7**

What does God want from his people? Verses 6-7 gives us the wrong answer first.

### 1) Quality of Sacrifice Verse 6

“With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?”

The people have heard Micah’s words of warning and now they want to know, “What does God want from us?”

Their first answer deals with quality of sacrifice. A yearling calf was a one-year-old calf. That was considered the prime age for sacrifice. Perhaps God will be pleased if we give him the very best that we have.

But the **answer is no**.

### 2) Quantity of Sacrifice Verse 7a

“Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil?” If it’s not quality he wants, then perhaps it’s quantity.

The idea is to impress God by offering a thousand rams at a time and then creating a river of oil flowing through the streets.

Surely that would make God happy. The idea is that an extravagant sacrifice would convince God of their sincerity.

But the **answer is no**.

### 3) The Ultimate Sacrifice Verse 7b

“Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

This is an immoral suggestion. Child sacrifice was forbidden by God, yet practiced by the pagan peoples around Israel.

The people are suggesting that if they offer their firstborn sons, the Lord would be pleased and would forgive their sins.

But the **answer is no**.

### Summary of Verses 6-7

1) See the picture Micah paints.....“Let’s Make a Deal” religion.....trade forgiveness for sacrifice.....thought God could be bought just like their leaders!

2) Is this typical of us.....do we do the same thing?

2a) “Lord, I’ll do anything you want. You name your price”

2b) Missionary.....married or to stay single.....children no children.....preacher or a pastor.....deacon or an elder.....I’ll pray every day and read my Bible.

2c) Whatever you want from me, that’s what I’ll do. I really mean it, Lord.”

3) Good sentiments.....noble and proper.....God is pleased when we offer ourselves to him.

4) So what’s wrong?.....answers only deal with the outside.....God wants your heart.

4a) Missionary and have a hard heart.

4b) Married or single big family or little and have a rebellious heart.

4c) You can be very religious and yet far away from God.

5) Israelites rejected by God.....missed the point.....make a deal versus God wanting their hearts.

### **The Right Answer Verse 8**

That brings us to the right answer in verse 8.

This verse has been called the heart of Old Testament religion and the greatest verse in all the Old Testament.

It sums up what God really wants from you and me.

This is the kind of verse you ought to commit to memory, write out on a card, and put it in your mirror so you can look at it every day.

It tells us exactly what God looks for in your life.

*“He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”*

## **1) Justice**

The Hebrew word is mishpat. Often in the Old Testament this word is applied to God's own character. God is just—he is absolutely fair and righteous in all his dealings. He gives to each person exactly what they deserve. Justice means “treating people right because you know God.” In the Bible this concept is applied in some very concrete ways: caring for the poor, remembering the widows and orphans, not plowing the corners of your field so the hungry could get food, speaking the truth, paying a fair wage, having honest scales, no cheating, no extortion, and refusing to take advantage of the less fortunate.

For us at Christmastime justice certainly means doing right to the less fortunate because we know God.

## **2) Mercy**

This speaks of the way we treat others. The Hebrew word is hesed, which means “loyal love” or “patient love.” It's the word sometimes translated “his mercy endures forever.” It means loving the unlovely even when they don't love you back. It speaks to our obligation to care for people who don't care for us.

Here's a simple definition of mercy: Doing unto others as God has done unto you. In just a few days 2014 will be history. Think back across the last 12 months. How has God treated you this year? Has God blessed you? Then bless others. Has God forgiven you? Then forgive others. Has God lifted you up when you were down? Then lift others up when they are down. Has God overlooked your faults? Then overlook the faults of others.

The word translated “mercy” is elsewhere translated as “lovely” or “beautiful.” Here is a quality that will make you beautiful to others. Show mercy and people will bear witness to real beauty!

## **3) Humility**

The word “humbly” comes from a Hebrew word that means “modestly” or “carefully.” It speaks of an attitude that is the opposite of pride. What is humility? It's having a right view of yourself because you have a right view of God. Humility does not mean saying, “I'm a nothing or I'm useless.” That's not humility, that's self-pity, which is really another form of pride.

And what is pride? It's having too large a view of yourself because you have too small a view of God. When your God is big, you will be small, and pride will be impossible.

This is statement of humility. "God made me and I belong to him. Every good thing I have in life is a gift from the Almighty. Some have more, some have less. It matters not to me. I thank God for what I have and I'm going to do the best I can with what God has given me, and I'm going to leave the outcome with him."

If we live that way, it will save us so much trouble. We won't have to get into a power game at work or live in the rat-race or sell our convictions to get ahead. We won't get angry at the silly comments people make. Humility enables us to be who we are in Christ. And we don't have to worry about what others think.

### **Three Simple Words**

What does God want from us this year at Christmas time? Justice ... Mercy ... Humility.

Rightly understood, those three words form the sum total of our Christian duty.

If we have these things, God is pleased. If we don't, nothing else makes much difference.

That brings us back to Micah. Why didn't God accept all their sacrifices? Why did he turn them down? Because they offered him everything except the one thing he really wanted—their hearts.

### **Closing.....**

What does God want from me at Christmas time (and every other day as well)? Justice ... Mercy ... Humility. These are matters of the heart. He wants the real you—the person on the inside.

This is why Jesus Came. Matthew 12:18 says, "He will proclaim justice to the nations." When Mary sang of Jesus birth she said, "His mercy extends to those who fear him" and "He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble" (Luke 1:50, 52).

This is the heart of the gospel. What God requires....he first gives to us.

He came to establish justice!

He came to show mercy!

He came to lift up the humble!

## **Call to salvation**

After 2000 years Jesus still knocks at the door of our hearts. Will we make room for him this year?

Have you ever done that?

Have you ever given him your heart?

If you have given him your heart was it complete? Was it the whole thing?

No decision is more important. No one else can make it for you. If you aren't ready, then nothing can compel you to come to Christ. But if you are ready, then it's time for you to surrender your heart to the Lord.

The Bible says that "To all who received him, to those who believed in him, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

## **Prayer**