

Joy to the World
Sermon – Christmas Eve 2018

In the last few weeks, many of us were in a rush and started our days with a shopping list. We were thinking about gifts because Christmas is about gifts and surprises.

Tonight and tomorrow, as we gather with our families and friends, we will share so much love and fun, and we will enjoy so many joyful things together.

If we ask people what they enjoy the most during Christmas time, we might get various answers: chance of snow, lights, vacation, hot chocolate, eggnog, gingerbread house, ornaments, parties, presents, treats, carols and music, Santa, time with friends and family, the chance to feel like a kid again, and attending the church service.

The three most dominant and enjoyed things are:

- FOOD: Hopefully we will share great food. I heard that on a grocery store there was a big sign saying; “Christmas is all about the food.”
 - o I like food and I like to eat during holidays, but I like much more to eat with loved ones, with family members and dear friends.
- WINE: A few days ago, I was at the LCBO and the sales person said: “For Christmas, I would recommend this wine. ...”
 - o I like great wine as well, and I am glad that in the Bible Paul encouraged his young servant to have a daily glass of wine which would fix his digestive system.
- BUYING GIFTS for those whom you love.

All these things are awesome and give us great temporary fun.

Now, let us focus on those things which give us not just temporary fun but an everlasting joy, which will stay with us after we finished the meal and emptied our glasses. Let us open our hands for the gifts which are given to you and me by God, our Loving Heavenly Father.

God is the greatest giver in the universe. Giving gifts on Christmas is not something we humans invented. God started the giving when he gave a gift beyond words, the unspeakable gift of His Son. “For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life” John 3:16.

Please open your heart, because tonight God wants to give you those gifts which Jesus brought you from heaven.

Tonight Jesus Christ wants to present to you three gifts, starting with the letter L, which He brought you with His first coming. Remember, they are Christ’s Christmas gifts to you.

1. Life

In the Bible, Jesus mentions this gift 36 times: True, Eternal, and Spiritual Life. He alone can give real meaning to your life. If you still struggle with the meaning of your life, please come to Jesus, and He will explain to you His divine purpose with you, giving you a forever happy and joyous life.

Many philosophers tried to find out the truth about the purpose of life, and about life after life. Many humans were, and many are, still meditating to find the answer to eternal answers. Some tried to create a religion which would bring people some more comfort in distress. However, all those thinkers were only humans, and they just tried to visualize and picture the truth about God.

Jesus Christ as God is teaching us the truth as the Son of God. Jesus is bringing us not only the answer to our burning questions, but also He is bringing us signs, proof and gifts from heaven. Jesus said "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes God who sent Me, has eternal life." John 5:24

Jesus also said: "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" John 11:25-26

Jesus not only said these things, but he also proved that He is the resurrection and the life. "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life." John 3:36

2. Light

In this world, without Jesus, everyone is in spiritual darkness. We stumble around in the darkness and cannot find our way out from our dark feelings, fears, and thoughts. Jesus came to light our way and to take away our fears. John, the apostle, declared that "In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind." John 1:4

Many world religion creators claim to know the light, but Jesus alone could say truly about Himself that HE is the "true light" that gives light to everyone. Jesus said: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

3. Love

Jesus came from heaven to bring us, love. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace, also love, and truth." John 1:14

Jesus is God's gracious gift of love. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him." John 3:16-17

Life, Light, and Love - All the Christmas presents in the world are worth nothing without the presence of Christ.

I would like to give you some advice tonight:

Look up into the Father's face and tell Him you have received His Christmas gifts with joy.

Then ask God to shine His light in your heart and mind today.

Ask God to give you a greater understanding of who Jesus is.

Tell God about all the things on your heart you have thought are "impossible."

Thank God for your salvation in Jesus or receive it for the first time.

Ask God to help you obey Him.

Ask God to show you how you can shine your light.

Take your break, enjoy Christmas time, have fun and rejuvenate yourself and your spirit. Keep your heart anchored on Jesus. Let us celebrate Him in all our festivities. I do believe that, if we continue to share Jesus' life by retelling the Christmas stories, if we light up peoples' hearts by singing the Christmas songs, and spread the Christmas love, we can share His Life, Light and Love to this world. May the Christ in Christmas stay with you all the year long. Amen