

My Thoughts for Sunday 26 October 2014

"The Gift"

For weeks I wracked my brain and searched the malls. Whatever was I going to get for my friend? I went up and down the aisles in every direction. I searched out store after store. I searched the internet. Whatever was I going to do? This had to be a gift that would be appreciated, something I felt sure my friend would enjoy and be grateful for and maybe even treasure. Finally I found exactly what I was looking for. I just knew my friend would like my gift.

The day came; the gift was wrapped and presented to my friend who had other gifts from friends just like me. The gifts were all placed on a table and the festivities went on. We all expected the gifts would be opened while we were there celebrating our many friendships. The party came to an end; we all went home, and the gifts remained unopened. I never heard from my friend about the gift and felt some very mixed emotions; doubt- did my friend like my gift; fear- did I not really know my friend? Maybe I even felt a bit of anger- couldn't my friend at least acknowledge receiving my gift? Several weeks later I had reason to visit my friend again and there sitting in the same place it was when I left; the gift, unopened. Out of courtesy, I did not question my friend and finally just went home very hurt and sad that our friendship did not mean more.

How do you think your God feels? He has given each of us a gift that no one could ever duplicate. He didn't shop the malls, didn't search the internet or even wrack His brain trying to decide what to give each and every one of us. This was not a gift we could ever deserve. It was not something we could earn. No, it was a free and undeserved gift purely out of His love and compassion for us. He loved us when we did not deserve it, even as we despised Him and turned away from Him.

I know most of you have at least heard of this gift. If not, then let me jog your memory or totally enlighten you to this greatest of truths, this greatest gift of all time to a sin filled, dying world. Recorded for us in God's holy Word, the Bible, the gospel writer, the apostle John tells us at John 3:16-17 (HCSB)

¹⁶ *"For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life.*

¹⁷ *For God did not send His Son into the world that He might condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*

WOW! What a truly undeserved gift. We were all sinners in the eyes of God from the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden "as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, in this way death spread to all men, because all sinned. [Romans 5:12](#) (HCSB)

What do we do with this gift that our loving God has given us? Do we just leave it sitting on the table unopened and presumably unwanted? Or do we open that gift and learn what this gift truly means for our lives and what little we have to do to gain the value of it? Perhaps you are one of the many in the world today that believe that all one needs to do to be saved and go to heaven is to do good deeds. Perhaps help a few homeless people: Give a little food or clothes to the homeless or just be a good person and not hurt anyone? Let's see what the scriptures, God's Word, have to say about those "good" people in the world.

In his portrait of sinners, the Psalmist wrote: ¹ *“the fool says in his heart, “God does not exist.” They are corrupt; they do vile deeds. There is no one who does good,”* [Psalms 14:1 \(HCSB\)](#) Then we look to Matthew as he writes the words of Jesus for us, ¹⁷ *“Why do you ask me about what is good?” He (Jesus) said to him. “There is only one who is good. If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”* [Matthew 19:17 \(HCSB\)](#)

I now look back to how I felt when I saw that unopened, unused gift I had given my friend. I remember how I felt with my friend's lack of concern and caring and I wonder just how God would feel on that last day if I stood before His throne of judgment and He sees that I have not taken the time to even look at the gift He has given me. I dread the thought about what my righteous God might think as he says to me something like "Wasn't it even worth looking at? Couldn't you even take a moment out of your life to see what I gave you?"

What might His thoughts be when you stand there with your unopened gift and try to explain that you spent all your time trying to help others and just didn't have time to open His most precious and life saving gift. He asks so very little of us, not good deeds; not great works to gain us access to heaven; this will never get the job done. All He asks is written back in our text for this message, *“that whosoever BELIEVES in Him shall be saved”* Is that so very difficult? Believe and be saved. I recommend you waste no more time in opening that very precious gift He has sent you, understand it, believe, and be saved. By all indication, the time may be running out for many of us. Don't wait for the "eleventh hour" to open the gift and find He returned in the "tenth".