



God's Perfect Gift

Devotion

[Please provide: musical accompaniment; hymnals for attendees.]

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8).

At this time of the year, our minds can focus on the brightly colored packages with shiny bows tucked neatly underneath the Christmas tree. We wonder, "What is in those packages that we see?" Regardless of our age, we all enjoy receiving Christmas gifts. What is the best Christmas gift you have ever received? [Allow time to share some of the answers.]

The best gift I was thinking of was not wrapped and waiting for me under the Christmas tree, but it was a Christmas gift, of sorts. My gift came a little before Christmas when my first child, a daughter, was born on December 2.

Even though my daughter was a wonderful gift, she was not the perfect gift. There is one gift that fits all sizes, all ages, all nationalities, all races. It is a gift we can all share. Once you have discovered this gift, you will not want to return it. That is why it is the perfect gift for everyone. My baby was not this perfect gift, but another baby was. That baby, that perfect gift, is Jesus.

Many do not think they need the gift of Jesus. Many ask, "At Christmas, why do we need to talk about a baby who was born over 2,000 years ago?" Romans 3:23-24 answers that question. That passage states, ... *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ...* Our sins separate us from God. To save us from the eternal death our sins cause, God sent Jesus, the perfect gift, to redeem us through His death and resurrection. Jesus has bought us back and made us righteous (perfect and sinless) before God, so that God now views us as justified. That means God declares us innocent and sees us just as if we have never sinned. How does Jesus do this? It is only through grace, which is undeserved love. This is the essence of this perfect gift. It is something we do not deserve, but is freely given to us by our loving heavenly Father!

I had thought waiting almost nine years for my daughter was a long time, but people waited, and waited, and waited for many centuries for Jesus, the perfect gift, to arrive. Today some are still waiting to hear of Jesus. The work of the LWML is so important to all those people still waiting in darkness. The LWML produces Christ-centered materials we can use to share the Good News of Jesus. The LWML raises funds to support missionaries throughout the world. The Holy Spirit works through the Word we and those missionaries share so that those sitting in darkness will be able to join Jesus, the perfect gift, for eternity in heaven. At Christmastime, we celebrate when this perfect gift came to earth. Jesus **is** our gift. He is the perfect gift for everyone!

Let us join together in singing verses 1, 3, and 4 of "The People That in Darkness Sat" LSB 412, TLH 106, LW 77.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, at Christmastime and always, help us to proclaim to all the world that You are the perfect gift. May the Holy Spirit work through Your Word of truth that we and missionaries proclaim so that those in darkness may come to know You as their Lord and Savior. In Your name we pray. Amen.

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