

# A Christmas Gift for Jesus

#0478

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—December 14, 1968

This season of the year, most everybody is thinking about gifts—giving gifts and receiving gifts. Why is this? What is there about this season of the year that people are celebrating? Somebody says, “This is Christmas season.” And Christmas, what is that? “Well, that’s the celebration of Jesus’ birth—His birthday.” Well, of course, we don’t know what day He was born. The good news is: He *was* born. We can remember that *any* day and *every* day.

I’d like to ask you this question. Did any of you boys and girls ever go to a birthday party? Were there any presents? Who got the presents? The person having the birthday. I think that’s the way it’s usually done, isn’t it? Yes. And isn’t it strange that with millions celebrating the birthday of Jesus, He’s not even on the birthday gift list of most? Isn’t that strange? How about your Christmas list? Fathers and mothers on it, brothers and sisters, your husband or your wife, your children, uncle Joe and aunt Doris, cousin Jim, and the neighbors, and so on. Some people have a Christmas list a yard long. And whose birthday is this supposed to be? Jesus. Let’s think of Him and remember Him, what do you say? And let’s make His the biggest gift of all, the best gift on our list.

Now, of course, when we’re giving gifts to people, if we love them, we like to know what about the gift? It’s something that they want. I suppose a number of us have had the experience of getting gifts that we didn’t have any particular use for. And I suppose that many of us have had the problem of thinking, “I wonder what uncle Harry would like for Christmas. Let’s see. Give him this.” And somebody says, “Oh, no, he’s got that already.” Then you think of something else. And somebody says, “I don’t think he’d like that. I wonder what he’d like.”

I wonder what Jesus would like. Would you like to know? You’ll find it in Hosea, the sixth chapter, and the sixth verse. Wouldn’t it be a wonderful thing if every boy and girl and the rest of us grown folk, if every one of us here would give Jesus a Christmas gift and it would be just what He wants? We can. You don’t have to be a millionaire to do it. In fact, if a millionaire gives Him this gift, he’ll have to do it just the same way you do.

“For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice” Hosea 6:6.

Another version states it: “I don’t want your sacrifices, I want your love. I don’t want your offerings, I want you to know Me.” The more I’ve been thinking of this in recent days, the more it seems to me I know just a little how our dear Savior feels. Or, if you’ll allow me to put it this way: I feel just the same. That’s what I want from those I love—not their gifts but themselves; not something they buy, but their love. Oh, don’t misunderstand me, it’s a nice thing to get a present wrapped up in a package, and we take off the wrappings and wonder what it is. But 99 percent of it is

the love that's back of it and the love we feel as we receive it? And without that, it's not worth very much.

There's one thing at once that makes me glad about this, and that is that all of us can share in this—all of us can give Him this gift. Can't we? In a way, it's quite expensive. But the poorest person in this world can have this experience. I wonder why He would want our love anyway. I'll not try to explain it, for it's a mystery. One of the greatest mysteries of the universe—why God should want my love. But He does. He says so, and look what He has done to prove it. Everything in creation, everything in redemption, is showing us His love and His longing for our love in return. For that is what love seeks—love in return. Someone was telling me about a wealthy woman who made trips to different parts of the world. She had a daughter at home who had to spend a great deal of her time in an institution, a hospital; she was crippled. And this wealthy mother showered gifts upon this girl. She'd send her this expensive present and that expensive present. One day, when she was about to leave for Europe, she made arrangements for a very expensive present to be taken to the hospital to her daughter's room. And when it was delivered, and the daughter looked at it, she burst out in tears. She said, "I don't want these presents, I want my mother."

Although it seems impossible for us to grasp, and we can only, in our best moments of understanding, get a tiny bit of it, it is true that the Creator of the universe is hungry for our love. And if our gifts are in any way a substitute for that, He doesn't get one bit of pleasure out of them. Whether it's the tithe we pay into the treasury of the church, or our gifts for home and foreign missions, or the gifts we give to Him in the person of the poor and needy, or the starving, whatever the nature of the gift we give if it's something we do to ease the conscience or to merely perform a duty, something that we do as a part of our religious performance, something we do because we think it's expected (others expect it, we expect to do it, God expects it), I wouldn't say that any of those reasons are bad reasons, but they're not what He wants. None of those reasons strike that cord of appreciation in His heart.

In that ancient sanctuary which was the earthly replica, the earthly copy of the heavenly temple, there were sacrifices day by day, continually. And God told them to bring those sacrifices. There were offerings of all kinds: the sin offering, the burnt offering, the trespass offering, the peace offering. Some came once a year, like Passover, Feast of Tabernacles. Others came monthly, the New Moon. Special offerings came weekly at the Sabbath. Other offerings came every day, every morning. On that brazen altar, the lamb was slain, sacrificed. Every evening, another lamb was brought. The people were bringing offerings all the time; there wasn't a day in the year, but what you could go to that sanctuary, that temple, and see people coming bringing their offerings, bringing their gifts, bringing their sacrifices.

Somebody says, "I thought you were just reading that God didn't want that." Well, I'll read it again. Let's go to the 40<sup>th</sup> Psalm.

"Sacrifice and offering Thou didn't not desire" Psalm 40:6.

Why did He tell them to bring them? Go over the 51<sup>st</sup> Psalm.

“For Thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it:  
Thou delightest not in burnt offering” Psalm 51:16.

No, God took no pleasure in those rivers of blood that were slain in the ancient service. His one great reason He took no pleasure in those animal sacrifices: what did every one of those lambs slain at the altar and consumed there, what did that represent? Jesus, the Son of God. Can you think of how that Father heart must have been torn when again and again He witnessed on earth the symbolic representations of the suffering and death which His own Son would experience? No, He took no pleasure in that. Why did He have them do it? That they might understand something of the awful cost of sin, and that they might feel something of the suffering which He felt and continues to feel as long as sin continues. That’s what it was for, friends. It wasn’t to bring any pleasure to God; it didn’t.

In and through it all, He was longing that in the very act of bringing those offerings and making those sacrifices something of an understanding of His great love in giving Himself as a sacrifice would come to their hearts, and that, in turn, they would love Him. That is the thing that would please Him—their love. But, as the enemy often does, he tried to turn everything around. And multitudes of those dear people came to the place where they thought that these gifts and offerings and sacrifices were part of the way in which they would earn Heaven. That bringing a lamb or a goat or a bullock and killing it and putting it on the altar would entitle them in some way to some merit by which they would be admitted into Heaven. That’s paganism.

And may I tell you, there are many pagans in Christian churches today, even in the remnant church. We need to beware lest we think that some act we perform, some gift we give, some sacrifice we make this entitles us to at least a good mark. Sometimes we *foster* that sort of thing, in our Sabbath schools, in our missionary work, and in our young people’s work—forever giving people the idea that, if they *do* some little thing or *know* some little thing, they must have some honor. All such things tend to obscure the very thing we’re trying to study tonight. The way to make God happy is just to give Him our love with no thought of human recognition or praise. Now I know that when we feel that way, we’ll want to bring our offerings, but not to buy His favor, and not with the thought that the offering is going to, in some way, thrill Him. No, it’s the love that does it.

Do you remember that there in the temple court, the rich men were coming and bringing their offerings and putting them in the place where the offerings were received, and Jesus stood there and never said a word; He just looked? And finally, there came a poor widow who put in two mites. And at once the Savior’s face lighted up. Do you remember what Jesus said about it? She’d done what? Given what? More than they all. And there are various answers as to just how and in what way she gave more than they all. But I’ll tell you, the best answer is the simplest one. The reason she gave more than they all: she gave what we’re studying about tonight—she gave her love. Those rich men were giving either from the sense of duty or just to show off. They wanted everybody to see how liberal they were, and for the community to think, “There’s so and so, he’s really a wonderful fellow.” But the poor widow, she tried to give without observation. She knew that the size of her

gift didn't merit any notice. But what was it that prompted the gift? Love. She understood what God had written through David and through Hosea hundreds of years before.

I don't want your sacrifices, I want your love. I don't want your offerings, I want you to know Me.

Let's look at that last line now: "I want you to know Me." Do you know why this goes along with the other line? I'll tell you why, friends. The only way we can love Him is to know Him. Did you ever love somebody very much that you didn't know at all? Of course not. You can't do that. Oh, you might feel sorry for some starving people halfway around the world; in *that* kind of love, make a donation. But you don't love them as individuals; you don't know them. And God knows that you can't even love God unless you know Him. And the reason He's on so few Christmas lists this season is that so few people know Him.

You know, friends, it would take something more than my sending a Christmas present either to the president or the president-elect to get real acquainted with him, wouldn't it? And don't think that you're going to discharge the obligation and meet the opportunity of tonight's message by saying, "Well, I better give Jesus a present. I wonder how I'll do that. I wonder how much I better give Him." Listen, if that's all there is to it, you've missed the whole point. He says, "I want you to know Me. I want you to be acquainted with Me. I love you, and if you only knew how much I loved you, you'd love Me in return, and that would make My heart thrill with joy. And I want it so because I know that's the only way you can be truly happy."

You see, to love Him is to love His character—to like the way He does things, to admire His attributes. If I think of Him merely as a glorified Santa Claus, I may be glad when He gives me what I want, but what will I do and what will I say when He says No, or when there seems to be no answer? My problem then is that I simply don't know Him.

He's not some Santa Claus. He's something infinitely different and infinitely better. The great purpose of prayer is not to submit to Christ a list of the things we want for Christmas or New Year's and then run off, busy about our affairs and other people's. "I want you to love Me, and I want you to know Me." Do you know what that takes? That takes one of the most expensive investments in any life. It requires T-I-M-E. We measure it with the clock. God measures it by the suffering of His broken heart over a spinning world. For the cross is a revelation to our dull senses of the *pain* that began when *sin* began, and that can never stop till sin stops. That was the meaning of those endless sacrifices. And what was there in type and symbol, tonight is in the Heavenly Sanctuary in reality. John saw the Savior, read it in Revelation 5, the slain Lamb as the center of the heavenly picture. Christ was still represented there in the courts above as the Lamb that had been slain. Yes, this is what it cost to keep time coming to us, so precious that it is doled out a minute at a time. And what's it for? Its great purpose is that we may have the opportunity to know God—to know Him through His Word, to know Him through His works in nature, to know Him through His ways, as we see Him at work in human experience, our own and other people's.

But it takes time to read His Word. It takes time to observe His works in nature. It takes time to ponder over what He's doing in the daily experiences of life. All of that takes time. Ah, my dear friends. The greatest gift that we might give Jesus this season is to say, "Dear Lord, I'm going to take you at Your Word. I'm going to give you my love, all I have. And I'm going to give You time so that I can get acquainted with You, so that I'll know You better and love You more through the days of this coming new year." Oh, I wish somebody would do that tonight.

Turn back to Hosea 6. We read the sixth verse: "I don't want your sacrifices, I want your love. I don't want your offerings, I want you to know Me." Now the third verse:

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning" Hosea 6:3.

Do you know how the morning breaks? As we started off the other morning on a trip, the stars were shining; Orion was setting in the west; the morning star was off here in the southeast. As we journeyed along, it began to get a little light in the east. By and by, the stars began to grow dim. And the moment comes when the sun appears on the horizon and begins its stately march overhead. And there isn't a moment from that first earliest ray until the noontide, but what the sun is getting brighter, the light is getting more, moment by moment. This says, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." And this is the way we're to know Him. We're to know Him today better than we did yesterday; we can know Him tomorrow better than we know Him today. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

To know Him is to love Him. Wouldn't you like, this very evening, to settle it in your heart that this coming year you're going to spend more time in getting acquainted with Him in this Word? Not just to get acquainted with the Bible, but to get acquainted with Him. Not just to know the facts and figures that inspiration has put in this book, but to know the person who, in this book, has sought more than anything else to reveal Himself to you and me. And so in nature. Will you allow me to say it, friends? It seems to me it cheapens the whole thing to say, "If you get acquainted with the names of 10 birds or 10 trees, I'll give you an honor that you can wear around." What's the whole purpose of getting acquainted with the birds and the trees and the flowers? It's to know Him, and therefore to *love* Him.

The greatest honor that you can ever get through studying nature is the honor of being a special friend of God—to hear His voice in the song of the bird and the sighing of the wind through the trees, to know the joy and the fellowship of walking with Him up the mountain trail or through the park, under the trees or under the blue sky, under the shining sun or the twinkling stars, to know that every bird, every flower, every tree is something that your Best Friend has made and has sent you as a love letter, a message of His love, and to let your heart go out as you mingle with those created things, in appreciation, in love.

Oh, how cheap the TV programs seem compared with this. Do you see His face on that jumping screen? Do you hear His voice?

Oh occasionally, there's a message from the Master. But every day and every hour, we may meet Him in His Word and in His works. Every day and every hour, we may be in fellowship with Him in prayer, on our knees at times, but in communion with Him moment by moment as we go about our work. I hope that none of us will just give Him a present and run off about our business. It will make Him feel bad. He won't even open the present, maybe.

If we know Him, we'll love Him, and if we love Him, we'll be giving. Don't worry about that. Don't let some church treasurer or missionary leader get worried for fear if we accept this message it'll make the offerings fall down or the missionary activity less. If it does, friends, I say, "amen." If there's a soul of us so selfish or so sick that our gift or our missionary activity is motivated by *anything* except what we studied tonight, the quicker it stops, and we find out that we're sick or dead, the better.

Oh, let's pray for a revival and a reformation. Let's pray for a resurrection. If in any sense, we're performing acts which Heaven has no interest in, just to gain some merits to salve our conscience or for any other reason, there is only one thing that makes our missionary activities, or our gifts, or our offerings of any value to Jesus, what is it? Love.

The decision is yours. There are two things you can decide. One thing is to give Him whatever love you have. Give Him all you have. The other thing you can decide with that is to give Him the time day by day to get better acquainted with Him so that as the morning dawns, your understanding of His love will grow greater and brighter and richer and more glorious through the days to come. How many of us would like to send Him the word tonight that He is the first and the best on our list, and that we're giving Him the one gift that He really wants?

[Testimony Service Follows]

Loving Father, we thank Thee with all our hearts for the love of God. And we're so glad you've made us so we can love back. Thy love is so great and ours so little, but Lord as Thou hast given us all Thou dost have, we thank Thee that we can and do give Thee all we have. And we're glad tonight, in a new and special way, that this makes Thee happy. Amen.

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