

ALL too often the **Holiday Season** gets swallowed up in the busyness of shopping for gifts, wrapping presents, sending cards, and partaking in gift exchanges and get-togethers. Those who partake in the holiday tradition of gift giving spend much time and energy thinking about what kind of deal they can snag for someone on their list. Others, perhaps children, spend much time thinking and daydreaming about what gifts they will receive. Maybe to one degree or another, this describes you during this time of year. Maybe the gifts, the shopping, the anticipation of everything going on occupies much of your attention. I ask you to take a moment as you read this tract and consider something of eternal importance. Have you given any consideration to the perfect gift that God has given to mankind? Have you received his free gift? If you're wondering what this gift is, it is the forgiveness of your sins and eternal life. **"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."** (Romans 6:23)

WHY DO YOU NEED THIS GIFT? In the beginning, God created man upright. The first humans were Adam and Eve. However, they disobeyed God and sinned against him. **"Wherefore, as by one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."** (Romans 5:12) As a result of Adam and Eve's sin, every single one of us has inherited a sin nature that is rooted deep within our hearts. **"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin."** (Galatians 3:22) This includes you. Whether you realize it or not, you have sinned and are guilty before God. Think about your life for a moment in light of God's law, the Ten Commandments. How many times have you lied (Exodus 20:16), dishonored or disobeyed your parents (Exodus 20:12), stolen (Exodus

20:15), coveted something that belonged to someone else (Exodus 20:17), or committed idolatry by putting anything in your life as more important than God (Exodus 20:3)? Not only that, but God's law goes beyond committing a physical act, and condemns those who also commit sin in their heart, as Jesus taught: **"Ye have heard that it was said...Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."** (Matthew 5:27-28)

If you're thinking that you're not **THAT** bad of a person, please know that it only takes one sin to be found guilty and deserving judgment before the Lord and be in need of forgiveness. **"For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."** (James 2:10)

GOD is perfectly Just and Holy. Anyone who is guilty of breaking his law must face judgment and the penalty of what they've done. **"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."** (Hebrews 9:27) The penalty for breaking God's law is eternity in hell. **"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death."** (Revelation 21:8) This is why you need the gift of God!

HOW DID GOD GIVE THIS GIFT? God, in his love and mercy has provided for us a way to be forgiven by sending his Son, Jesus, to die a bloody death on the cross as our substitute. **"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners,**

Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) During his life on earth, Jesus perfectly kept all of God's commandments and then was punished on the cross to satisfy the demands of God's justice for your sin. Even in your sin and rebellion, Jesus took the punishment you deserve so you could be forgiven. **"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities... and with his stripes we are healed."** (Isaiah 53:5) He was buried, and rose again from the dead on the third day, conquering death and proving his death was acceptable to God as a payment for sin. **"...he [God] hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him [Jesus] from the dead."** (Acts 17:31) This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

HOW CAN YOU RECEIVE THIS GIFT? While the gift of salvation, forgiveness and eternal life is free, God has determined that this gift can only be received under the conditions of **"repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."** (Acts 20:21)

REPENT! **"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."** (Luke 13:3) Repentance is humbling yourself and admitting your guilt and spiritually lost condition before God. It is recognizing that you have sinned against him alone, that your sin has separated you from him, and that you deserve hell because of your sin. It also means to be sorry for your sin and rebellion against God, confess it, and hate it. **"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation."** (2 Corinthians 7:10) Surrender, and turn from going your own way in life to going God's way by submitting to Jesus as your Lord. Repentance also means to recognize that you have no merit, good works, or attributes that play a role in your salvation. Until you realize you are lost and utterly helpless to contribute anything to your salvation,

you will not receive grace and forgiveness. **“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”** (Ephesians 2:8-9) By trying to do something to earn salvation, it is no longer a gift and therefore cannot and will not be received. **“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.”** (Romans 11:6) You must recognize that your only hope of redemption is to trust solely in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ as a payment for your sins.

FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST:
“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts 16:31) Believing is more than just acknowledging that Jesus Christ exists; it's even more than acknowledging that he died and rose again. **“...the devils also believe, and tremble.”** (James 2:19) True belief is placing your complete confidence and trust in Him alone and His ability to save you by his death and resurrection. You must believe with all your heart that Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died on the cross to save you. **“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.”** (Romans 10:9-10) If the Lord is gracious enough to bring you to a place of repentance and desperation, recognizing that you are in need of salvation, you must cry out and call upon the Lord Jesus and ask him to forgive you for your sins and save you. **“...and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”** (Romans 10:10,13)

If it's genuine, the very moment that you repent and believe the gospel, you will be **“born again.”** Being **“born again”** means to have a conversion experience in which God supernaturally changes your heart and transforms you from a child of disobedience into a child of God. **“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”** (2 Corinthians 5:17) You will have a new nature, new desires to love Jesus Christ, to obey his word, to be with other Christians and to live for him every day. Loving God will manifest as a willful obedience to his word in your life. **“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”** (1 John 5:3) You will never be without sin, but you will no longer love your sin, live for your sin, or be in bondage to your sin; no matter how much power it has over you now, you will have victory over it. **“For sin shall not have dominion over you:”** (Romans 6:14) If these realities are absent in your life, it is likely you have never truly received the gift of God's mercy and been forgiven of your sins.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation.” (Hebrews 2:3) Today may be your day of salvation, friend. Do not wait or allow the busyness of the Holiday Season deter you! You are not promised tomorrow! The author begs you on Christ's behalf to receive this most precious gift by repenting and trusting Christ as your Lord and savior before it's eternally too late! **“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”** (John 1:12)

<https://www.oldpathsbaptistchurch.org>
www.sermonaudio.com/pastorcooley
salvationpreacher@gmail.com

