

WEDNESDAY—Accept His Gift—A Relationship!

Big Point: *The result of Christmas is that we get to know God personally by simply accepting His gift to us.*

As children we could hardly wait for Christmas day to arrive so that we could find out if we received the gifts we asked for. As we grew older and more mature we begin to realize that Christmas gifts, while wonderful when first received, are many times impractical, impersonal and will either run out or wear out and never really live up to the great expectations we so many times have.

The good news is that Christmas is not about the gifts we receive or the gifts we give but is about the gift that God so lovingly gave to us. Rick Warren presents four main features of God's gift to us.

- 1. God's gift is personal.** *It is custom made to you. It is the most personal gift you will ever receive.*
- 2. It is practical.** *This is the most practical gift you'll ever get. You need this gift that God has to offer you.*
- 3. It is priceless.** *Jesus Christ paid for it with his life. That's how much it cost to pay for this gift.*
- 4. It is permanent.** *It will last forever throughout eternity.*

Where are you going to get a gift like that? Nowhere, except from God. It is a gift for you that will solve all your biggest problems, heal all your deepest hurts, forgive every single mistake you've ever made, help you understand the purpose you were put on earth for, make you a better person, fill your life with confidence, joy and peace and eternally secure your future in heaven. It is a gift that will allow you to have a personal relationship with God.

When you realize just how wonderful and marvelous God's gift is to you there is only one thing required of you to receive it and that is to simply accept it.

READ...What does the Bible say?

Romans 5:10-11 (New Living Translation)

¹⁰ *For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son.* ¹¹ *So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.*

Psalms 70:4 (Living Bible)

"Let those who love your salvation exclaim, "What a wonderful God He is!"

THINK...Find the answers

What reason does Romans 5:10-11 give that we can rejoice in a wonderful relationship in Christ?

What does Psalms 70:4 say we are supposed to say when we love God's salvation?

LIVE...What will you do now?

Rick Warren describes God's gift to us as personal, unique for each of us and priceless. Describe how God's gift to you (a personal relationship with Him) is personal, unique and priceless to you.

Christmas is God's gift to us, but an unused gift is a worthless gift. Describe how you came to the point when you realized that you wanted to have a personal relationship with Christ. If you haven't reached this point yet, describe any reservations or questions you might have.

A personal relationship with God can help us solve our biggest problems. What problems has God helped you solve? Describe them in detail.

PRAY...God, What do you want me to know & do?

Pray and thank God for the wonderful gift He gave you at Christmas. Pray and ask God to help you develop a closer relationship with Him. Pray and praise God that He gave (or can give) you purpose and meaning to your life.

DAILY BIBLE READING COMMENTARY: Zechariah 1-7

The book of Zechariah picks up where the book of Haggai ended, so to speak. Zechariah is a contemporary to Haggai and his message is the same: Finish the Temple and enjoy God's blessing. Where Haggai's message was a combination of rebuke and promise of blessing, Zechariah is more encouragement and promise of future blessing. The first half of the book lays out eight visions. The latter portion of the book contain a number of prophecies about the first and second coming of the Messiah.

1:4-6 *If we don't learn from history, we will repeat it.*

2:3-13 *Zechariah tries to encourage the people concerning their future. God plans to bless them with more people (v. 4); more livestock (v. 4); Divine protection (v. 5); deliverance from enemies (v. 9); conversions of other ethnic groups (v.11); and, return the favor of God on His people (v.12).*

4:6-9 *God reminds the people through Zechariah that they would succeed, not because of their own might and power; but because of His Spirit. He would be the source of their victory. Great works are done by God's Divine hands (v. 6). The foundation of these works are human; the Lord works through people (v. 8). Great works are done by God's Spirit, through us, to glorify God (v. 9).*

7:1-10 *God questions the motive behind our behavior: While the Jews had fasted and feasted at appropriate times, Zechariah declared their spiritual rituals meant little unless accompanied by justice.*