

## **A CHEERFUL GIVER FOLLOWS GOD'S EXAMPLE**

By Terry Jones, November 16, 2008  
Christ's Church at Tiffin, Ohio

### **2 Corinthians 9:15**

#### **CENTRAL SERMON THEME – God's indescribable gift of grace through Jesus Christ is our supreme example for giving.**

INTRO. - According to Fortune Magazine the world's second richest man, Warren Buffett, is giving away his fortune. Fortune Magazine editor, Carol Loomis, reports Buffett is worth about \$44 billion. He plans to give away 85% of his huge wealth. In June of 2006 he announced he was giving his wealth away before he dies. His \$40 billion gift ranks as one of the biggest gifts in history. What a great gift! \$40 billion! His gift is indescribable!

As large as Buffett's gift is, it shrinks when compared to a gift given almost 2,000 years ago. Second Corinthians 9:15 reports this great gift. *Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!* The word, thanks, also means "praise." We praise God for this indescribable gift of Jesus Christ. Our gift is so great we want to share this gift with others. Our Vision is to be a church of Christ-sharing believers who study and apply the Bible, selflessly serve, display a Godly love for families, friends and community, and provide the necessary resources to support the mission of the church. Why is Jesus' gift the largest gift every given? There are four reasons Jesus is our greatest gift.

#### **I. GOD'S GIFT INCLUDES ALL SINS.**

A. Illus. - The Mariana Trench is the deepest part of the world's oceans, and the deepest location on the surface of the Earth's crust. It is located in the western North Pacific Ocean, to the east and south of the Mariana Islands, near Guam. In 1962, the surface ship M.V. Spencer F. Baird recorded a maximum depth of 35,840 feet. The world's tallest mountain, Mount Everest, is 29,035 feet high. The Mariana Trench is 6,805 feet deeper than Mount Everest is high. Imagine someone cutting Mount Everest off at the base of the mountain. Imagine moving Mount Everest from the area where Tibet, Nepal, and China border to the Mariana Trench and drop it into the hole. The Mariana Trench would cover Mount Everest with over one mile of water. God's grace is so deep God can throw all the sins of everyone who ever lived into the deepest part of His love. After our

sins are placed in God's grace, there is still more grace than there is sin. Romans 5: 20 - But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.

B. How great is God's love? Indescribable!

1. 2 Cor. 8:9 - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.
2. Psa. 32:1-2; Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.

B. The list of sins is indescribable.

1. Illus. - Let's suppose a doctor was so gifted he knew the cures for these major diseases. The ad in the Yellow Pages listed the specialties he could successfully treat; cancer, heart disease, diabetes, Alzheimer's, AIDS, viruses, and bacterial infections. The whole world would be seeking an appointment with this great doctor. Jesus cures the sins of all humanity.
2. Jesus' advertisement is Romans 1:18-32; list of the sins of unbelief
  - a. Idolatry - worshiped men, birds, animals, and reptiles
  - b. God permitted people to practice their lusts; women attracted to women and men attracted to men.
  - c. Unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful, and approval of those who practice these things.
3. One man, Adam, brought sin into the world.

C. Romans 5:18 - So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

1. Rom. 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
2. There is more of God's grace than the devil's sins.

D. God's gift of Jesus Christ is indescribable.

1. Applic. - What are we to do with this indescribable gift? We want to know about Christ so we study about Him. Our ability to

understand Him ends. In the Bible when people encounter the incomprehensible God, they praise Him!

2. Psa. 35:9 - Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD and delight in his salvation.

## **II. GOD'S GIFT INCLUDES ALL PEOPLE.**

A. A Sunday School teacher had just concluded her lesson and wanted to make sure she had made her point. She said, "Can anyone tell me what you must do before you can have forgiveness of sin?" There was a short pause and then, from the back of the room, a small boy spoke up. "Sin," he said. *Bits & Pieces*, May, 1991.

B. Sin includes all people.

1. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.
2. Therefore all of us need the great gift of salvation.
3. God selected one people, Israel, to save the world.
  - a. God's gift to the world, Jesus, is for the whole world.
  - b. God loves the whole world.
  - c. God loves each individual person in the world.

C. God loves everyone.

1. John 3:16 - God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son.
2. Our Mission "to lead people into a personal, lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ" is based on Matthew 28:19 - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them and teaching them to observe all I have commanded.
3. We exist to lead people into a personal, lifelong relationship with Jesus Christ.
4. Rev. 7:9 - A great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, was standing before the throne and the Lamb (Jesus). These are the people Jesus Christ has saved.

D. Illus. - Jeffrey Dahmer will definitely go down in history as a very wicked man. As a homosexual he abducted, raped, tortured, murdered and cannibalized his many victims. He is ranked among the world's worst men in the minds of people. A story about Dahmer was reported in the "Christian Chronicle" and "The Daily Oklahoman" newspapers.

A Christian lady named Mary Mott saw Dahmer on a TV show discussing his need for inner peace. Mott mailed a series of Bible lessons to Dahmer which he completed and mailed back to Mott. He thanked Mott and said he wanted to become a Christian. Through a series of events a Christian minister, Roy Ratcliff, went into the prison and studied the Bible with Dahmer. He was baptized by immersion in water on May 10, 1994. He continued to study the Bible every week in prison until the day of his murder on Nov. 28, 1994. One TV report quoted Dahmer as saying that he was at peace with himself and God, just two weeks prior to his murder. Did Jeffrey Dahmer go to Heaven? Can God forgive Dahmer? The Jews on Pentecost asked the Apostle Peter after he convicted them of murdering Jesus Christ, "What shall we do?" Peter replied to them, "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins" Acts 2:37-38. Which sin was worse? Dahmer's or the murder of the sinless Christ? God forgave 3000 souls for murdering Christ. The critical question is not whether God could forgive Dahmer, but whether Dahmer truly repented. Will Dahmer go to heaven? No one knows except God. It will be based upon the genuineness of Dahmer's repentance and conversion. Perhaps God picks one notorious sinner who repented from each generation and holds him up and says, "If I can forgive Jeffery Dahmer, I can forgive anyone of any sin."

E. Psalm 21:13 - Be exalted, O LORD, in Your strength; We will sing and praise Your power.

### **III. GOD'S GIFT INCLUDES ALL TIME.**

A. Jesus Christ only had to come one time.

1. Heb. 10:12 - Christ, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God.
2. Ex. - A line can represent all time from the beginning of time to the end of time. One end of the line represents the beginning of time. The opposite end represents the end of time. Mark the year Jesus Christ died on the cross and arose from the dead. The Bible declares Jesus sufficiently paid the punishment due to all people for their sins. From the point of Jesus' death and resurrection you can draw a line backward through the past to the beginning and forward into the future until the end of time. Jesus' sacrifice for sins covers all time.

- B. When we accept His indescribable gift for salvation our past, present and future were forgiven.
1. Rom. 8:1 - Therefore there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
  2. Applic. - We often think God forgave us of our past sins when we accepted Christ but not our present and future sins.
    - a. When Jesus died, all our sins were in the future.
    - b. The problem is that we tend to believe God's grace forgave our past sins, but we have to earn future forgiveness.
    - c. Ex. - The hymn, It is Well With My Soul, says, "My sin, not a part but the whole, was nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. It is well with my soul."
    - d. Does the belief I am forgiven before I commit a sin promote sin and immorality?
    - e. The grace that saves us also transforms our desires to never want to sin again, causing us to grieve over our sins.
- C. Illus. - I remember the day I accepted Jesus Christ by confession, surrender, and baptism. I was forgiven and cleansed. Thank God! Thanks to God for His indescribable gift!

#### **IV. GOD'S GIFT INCLUDES ALL ETERNITY.**

- A. Eternity is indescribable.
1. God is eternal, no beginning and no end.
  2. God made us to have a beginning but no end.
  3. God's gift of salvation will keep on giving for all eternity.
- B. God gives us eternal life.
1. Illus. - A young man once received from his father a beautiful, bright-red convertible. It was sparkling, new, clean, modern and powerful. He could never have afforded it. So delighted, the boy polished his car every week. He took pictures of it. He sent the pictures to friends. He looked it over - front, back, under, top, bottom, inside out. He never tired of telling others about the gift. "My Father gave it to me. It was free!" Some days later he was seen out on the highway, pushing his beautiful car. An individual walked up and introduced himself and asked if he could assist. "Oh, no thanks. Just out enjoying my new car," as he wiped the

sweat off his face. The man asked, "Have you pushed the car very far?" "Well, about 200 miles altogether. It's been hard, but since it was a gift from my Father, that's the least I can do in return to thank him." The helper opened the door on the right side and said, "Get in." After hesitation, he decided it was worth a try and he slid in on the passenger side and rested for the first time since he'd been given the car. The helper walked around, opened the door, slide behind the wheel, and started the car. "What's all that noise?" he said. Moments later they were moving down the highway quietly, at fifty to sixty miles an hour. It was so exciting. He no longer pushed his car but his car transported him. God gave us the gift of salvation to carry us through our struggles in life and into Heaven.

-- Larry Christenson, *The Renewed Mind*.

2. Heaven is a gift we cannot earn.
3. Our good works will only be rewards in Heaven.
4. Psa. 150:2 - Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.

**CONCLUSION** - I received a large gift over twenty years ago from a dear friend in the church. It was so large I felt guilty accepting it. After this man gave us this gift I told him, "This is the largest gift I have ever received." He corrected me, "No. It is not the largest gift you have ever received. Do you remember the preacher saying, 'Who gives this woman to be married to this man?'" I said, "Yes, I do." He said, "Your wife is your greatest gift." What a great discovery! Your spouse is your greatest gift in life. My old friend was slightly in error. Your spouse is your second greatest gift. Your spouse cannot save you from your sins. Your spouse cannot answer your prayers. Your spouse is not your greatest gift. Jesus Christ is our greatest gift. Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift.