

# The Unopened Gift

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## Hook:

### Invite children down for a kids message...

There are many traditions observed by families around this time of year. I'm sure you and your family has observed a number of traditions in the last couple days. Some of those are probably things that you don't even think about...you just do them! For my family, we have two Christmas Eve traditions: 1. Go to Christmas Eve Service. 2. Open one gift (It's almost always pjs)! Many traditions are different, but there is one tradition that is consistent no matter what family you grew up in...presents get opened!

A gift almost demands to get opened. It needs little explanation. So much so that a baby can do it! There are few things more unnatural than an unopened gift, but that's what we're gonna talk about today.

I recently read a story about a gift that went unopened for 47 years! The couple were high school sweethearts and she had bought him a gift for Christmas. Well in the days leading up to Christmas the couple ended up breaking up. The guy held onto that gift for 47 years, placing it under the tree almost every year. Eventually, his wife said enough is enough...open the gift! When he opened it, he found a 47 year old kids comic book about how to know you're in love. What a let down!

Some gifts are good...some gifts are necessary...and others can be disappointing, however all gifts demand to be opened.

I've spoke to other families who have had unopened gifts under their tree before, perhaps some of you here today have an unopened gift under your tree. Often times these gifts are reserved for loved ones who may be out of town, in the military, or even other deeper and personal reasons.

**Children, we have gotten each of you a gift today and it is hanging on that tree behind us. It is a simple reminder of the greatest gift, Jesus, who was given to us to be a sacrifice for our sins. All we must do to accept this gift is simply admit we have sinned and accept his forgiveness by making him Lord of our lives.**

Gifts are powerful. Often times they can bring excitement, joy, and even tears. They can be useful. They can be valuable. They can be life changing. However, the purpose of a gift is to be opened and until then, it has no power.

## Book:

Today we're gonna take a look at a man in scripture who was offered an incredible gift, but instead of receiving it, he chose to refuse it because of the cost he felt it would carry out on his life and position in the world. Turn in your Bibles to Matthew 2:1-8

**Matthew 2:1-8**

**1** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, [a]wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, **2** saying, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him."  
**3** When Herod the king heard *this*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. **4** And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born.  
**5** So they said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the prophet:  
**6** 'But you, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Judah, Are not the least among the rulers of Judah; For out of you shall come a Ruler Who will shepherd My people Israel.' "  
**7** Then Herod, when he had secretly called the [b]wise men, determined from them what time the star appeared. **8** And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found *Him*, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him also."

**Herod was given the same message as the wise men, but his response was completely different!**

Theologians and historians agree that the wise men (however many there were) were kings from eastern countries.

The wise men left their kingdoms to worship Jesus!

Herod persecuted Jesus to keep his kingdom!

The wise men were expecting a prophesied savior

Herod was caught off guard by perceived threat

The wise men brought gifts and bowed their knee

Herod drew swords and stiffened his back

So what can we learn from all of this???

**1. God is a giver of great gifts!**

- James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
- Faith, Hope, and Love. The greatest is love

**2. For every great gift, Satan has a counterfeit!**

- 2 Corinthians 4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**Look:**

**The gift of Jesus and a relationship with him is a gift that continues to bless. A gift that Herod missed out on, but we don't have to!**

- **Gift #1 Coaching to Life**
- **Counterfeit #1 Coaxing to Sleep**
  - John 10:10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.
- **Gift #2 Community with Life**
- **Counterfeit #2 Community of Lies**
  - 1 John 1:5-8 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. **6** If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. **8** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- **Gift #3 Commission for Life**
- **Counterfeit #3 Comfort is Life**
  - Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
  - Mark 10:42-45 And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> But <sup>s</sup>it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, <sup>4</sup> <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be <sup>t</sup>slave<sup>5</sup> of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but <sup>u</sup>to serve, and <sup>v</sup>to give his life as a ransom for <sup>w</sup>many.”

## Took:

All of these gifts are amazing! Remember, our God is a giver of great gifts! However, they also all fit together...

Tell story of presents on my 12th birthday being given to me out of order...

If we leave gifts unopened, we are missing out! Open all of God's gifts so that you may experience all He has to give!