

December 11th, 2022
Special Delivery: Week 2

With Christmas being just two weeks away, we are now firmly in the Christmas Party season, and at almost every Christmas party there will be some form of a Gift Exchange.

For those that have participated in events such as this, you know that inevitably... there will be that ONE GIFT that Nobody wants!

When YOU end up with it, you're thinking two things.

- Who brought a gift like this to the party?
- How can I get rid of it, and not get stuck taking it home?

Last week we talked about the Gift being REVEALED. It is a story of Mis-Direction.

Who would have ever written the script for Jesus to show up as He did?

But the reason that Christ came was because WE needed Rescued!

Maybe the biggest truth we learned was when the Angel told Joseph, *in the midst of a seemingly scandalous story...* YOU are to give him the name Jesus, *because he will rescue people from their sins.*"

The significance of Joseph doing this was to confirm in his heart (and ours) that what God Promises (even when we can't yet see it), God Fulfills!

Today I want to share with you about the Gift that Nobody wanted... the GIFT REVILED.

Matthew 27:1-2,17,21-22,26 (KJV)

When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and DELIVERED him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be CRUCIFIED.

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

On that day in Jerusalem, Jesus was the GIFT nobody wanted!

I. We can be Fooled by the Packaging

Like you can't judge a Book by its Cover, we have a tendency to think that the Christmas story is pristine and beautiful!

If we're given the choice of a beautifully wrapped Christmas gift over one that looked like it had been run over by an 18-wheeler, we'd pick the nice one every time. WHY?

It's great to read about the promise of Christmas...

Isaiah 9:6 (KJV)

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

But Isaiah also wrote these words...

Isaiah 53:3-4 (KJV)

He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

Isaiah 53:2,7 (KJV)

... he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him... He was oppressed, and he was afflicted...

The people would accept Jesus as a Baby, but they would despise him as their King!

We love Christmas Jesus! But there's more to His story! This Child-King would Grow with a message that can be hard to swallow!

You see, this Jesus people have problems with, and if you're NOT striving to walk in these teachings, you're choosing Barabbas too!

II. How many would say, All you want for Christmas is a Mannequin Jesus?

I want a Jesus that...

- Just stays where I put him
- One that doesn't say anything, or challenges my choices
- One that I can control, dress him up to look like the way I want him too

Sounds like all the things you can do with a BABY!

But Jesus is no longer the Babe in a Manger, he is the Powerful, Mighty, King of Kings and Lord of Lords!

We get to share in this wonderful, TRUE Christmas message. One that is far from some idyllic Hallmark movie, but one where God Almighty would go to extreme lengths.

WHY? So that each of us could have the opportunity to receive the greatest GIFT offered to all humanity....

- Salvation from our sin, and
- The promise of an everlasting home in heaven!

III. Two Boxes- You see, the Packaging does Matter!

He came this way: beautiful, but He left this way: torn up

And by leaving this way, the crowds jeer of Crucify Him, Our sin piled upon him, rejected by his father, placed between two criminals, and all of this is the most Special Delivery any of us could ever receive!

So, how do you get this GIFT today?

IIII. Choose & Receive... Invite JESUS to be the LORD of your Life

- the Full Jesus, Real Jesus, King Jesus
- not the Baby Jesus, Your Jesus, or a Mannequin Jesus!

Revelations 3:20 (NIV)

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...

I wonder about Barabbas... did he ever realize what the crowd's choice did that day? He may have gone free that day, but maybe ended up forever lost? What if he could have realized in that moment what it would have meant to really have Jesus take his place?

We may never know the end of his story, but your story can be eternally changed today!