

## SUNDAY BIBLE STUDY NOTES

— December 10, 2017 —

*Pastor Les Smith*

**SERIES: The Greatest Gift**

**SERMON: The Gift Worth Receiving**

**TEXT: John 1:9-14, 18**

### Central Message:

Last week, our focus was on John 3:16, arguably the greatest verse in the Bible. The most striking aspect of the verse is the clear and concise way that it reveals to us the very heart of God. God, out of a heart motivated by unconditional love, gave His only Son so that the whole world might be blessed to receive eternal life just by believing on His name. John shows us through this one verse that Jesus Christ was the gift worth giving because He made it possible for the world to be reconciled to God. This week, as we continue to focus on the greatest gift, we will examine how Christ was not just a gift worth giving, but He is also a gift worth receiving. There are *three essential truths* that emerge from the text which help us see that Jesus is the gift worth receiving.

**Essential Truth #1:** Jesus Christ is the gift worth receiving because He is the true light in a world filled with darkness. (John 1:9-11)

John declared Jesus to be the true light. In order to completely understand what he means, we have to deal with two issues. First, the light metaphor comes right out of the Old Testament. David, in Psalm 119, talked about God’s word being a lamp unto his feet and a “light” unto his path. God led the nation of Israel with a

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*“Knowing God and Making Him Known”*

pillar of clouds by day and a pillar of fire by night, thus giving illumination. Jesus gives us life when we believe, that life becomes our light or illumination, and that illumination allows us to have a personal relationship with God. Jesus, as the true light, signifies that there are those in the world masquerading as the light in order to deceive. Jesus is the gift worth receiving because He gives us the light that we need to know God and become a part of His family.

**Essential Truth #2:** Jesus Christ is the gift worth receiving because He transforms us from enemies of God to members of His family. (John 1:12-13)

Romans 5:10 lets us know that we were once enemies of God, but we were reconciled to Him by the death of Christ. Whether we realize it or not, we were all born into this world with a congenital heart defect that, if left unattended, was destined to keep us separated from God. But God, in His great mercy, sent the great heart “surgeon”, Jesus Christ, to give us a new heart and to rescue us from eternal death.

We should also recognize that sending Christ to rescue a fallen world was not God’s Plan B. We were not an afterthought. God, in His infinite wisdom and in His manifold grace, chose to save us even before the foundation of the world, and He decided that He would send His only Son to reconcile the world to Him.

**Essential Truth #3:** Jesus Christ is the gift worth receiving because He gave us a visible image of the invisible God. (John 1:14, 18)

In the Old Testament, the nation of Israel was not privileged to have a personal relationship with God. They were forced to worship at a distance and they needed an intermediary, the priests, to intercede to God on their behalf. They did not know God as Father. Then Jesus came and transformed the whole idea of what it meant to know God. Jesus said in John 14:9, “...He who has seen me has seen the Father.” In other words, Jesus was giving us a visible picture on the invisible God.

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Though He did not represent the physical image of God because God has no physical image, we saw God’s heart, God’s character, and God’s compassion in and through Jesus. John told us that no man has seen God at any time, but Jesus showed and explained Him through words and deeds that we could understand. We begin to grasp who God is and what He is like, all because the Word became flesh and lived among us.

Because of Jesus Christ, we received the “light” in the midst of a dark world. We, who were enemies of God, became members of His family; and we, who had no concept of who God is, were able to see a visible manifestation of the invisible God. That is why Jesus is the gift worth receiving.