

God the Holy Spirit has given to us spiritual gifts. God the Father has gifted us with Himself. God has gifted us with the church, with each other. And God the Father has given to us the gift of Jesus to save us from our sins.

We are all quite familiar with the Christmas story. Many of you can quote verbatim these words from Matthew chapter one. You learned those verses as a child when you yourself spoke them when you were taking part in the Children's Christmas Program in the church of your youth. Those of us who have seen the Charlie Brown Christmas special can hear these words spoken by the greater orator Linus. I quote. Retrieved from **A Charlie Brown Christmas**:

"I guess you were right, Linus. I shouldn't have picked this little tree," said Charlie Brown. "Everything I do turns into a disaster. I guess I don't really know what Christmas is all about. Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?"

"Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about," said Linus. [*Linus walks to center stage.*]

"Lights, please."

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men.*

Book 42, Luke (002:08-14)
The Bible, King James Version

[Linus picks up his blanket and shuffles off-stage.]

This leads me to the first point as we look at the Christmas story and what it means for us today. **1. God is always true to His word.** I believe the Bible to be the true Word of God without error. What we find in the Bible is exactly what God wants us to discover, to know, to learn, and grow from. It is God's revelation of Himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God's word is truth.

In the third chapter of Genesis, God announces the coming of Jesus and the ministry that Jesus would do for us on the cross. **Genesis 3:15b (NIV)** He [Jesus] will crush your head, and you [satan] will strike his heel." God already knew everything that would occur in history that would lead up to the birth of Jesus Christ, born from the family of father Abraham and king David. Genesis 12:3b **Genesis 12:3 (NIV)** "all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." In 2000 B.C. God spoke directly to Abraham and promised him, covenanted with him that the Messiah, the Savior of the world would be born through Abraham's family line. God is always true to His word.

The prophet Nathan spoke these words from God to King David. **2 Samuel 7:16 (NIV)**
¹⁶Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." David died but through his lineage the Messiah was born, as promised to David for God is true to His word.

The angel speaking to Mary uttered these words about the baby inside of her womb who was yet to be born. **Luke 1:33 (ESV)** ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise given to King David.

There are at least 100 predictions, 100 prophecies in the Old Testament fulfilled in the life of the Messiah, literally made hundreds if not thousands of years prior to His birth. Why we ever doubt the word of God is beyond me. God is always true to His Word.

Point 2. **God knows exactly what He is doing.** Jesus is no afterthought. The gift of Jesus' birth, perfect life, death, resurrection and ascension into heaven was not plan b. This was all planned before God created the universe. The gift of Jesus was set in motion in eternity past. God's knowledge and power are perfect in every way. God sees the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end. The final pages of history have already been written even as Jesus' first coming was written well before it occurred. God knows exactly what He is doing.

In his chapter, God Only Wise, J.I. Packer writes, "God's almighty wisdom is always active and never fails. All His works of creation and providence and grace display it, and until we can see it in them, we are just not seeing them straight. But we cannot recognize God's wisdom unless we know the end for which He is working. Here many go wrong. Misunderstanding what the Bible means when it says God is love (1 John 4:8-10), they think that God intends a trouble-free life for all regardless of their of their moral and spiritual state, and hence conclude that anything painful and upsetting (illnesses, accident, injury, loss of job, the suffering of a loved one) indicates with that God's wisdom, or power, or both, have broken down, or that God after all, does not exist. But this idea of God's intention is a complete mistake. God's wisdom is not and never was pledged to keep a fallen world happy, or to make ungodliness comfortable. Not even to Christians has He promised a trouble-free life, rather the reverse. He has other ends in view for life in this world than simply making it easy for everyone (page 81). God's ultimate end is for us to please God completely and praise Him fully, giving to God his rightful place in our lives making Him our all in all. When God becomes your

everything, you will lack absolutely nothing. We glory in God. We live to glorify God by enjoying God forever. This is the aim of God's wisdom working in our lives.

When we see the happenings of our day, it may look like God is asleep, taking a vacation somewhere, or at least taking a nap. Nothing could be further from the truth. **Isaiah 55:8 (ESV)** “⁸For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. **Isaiah 55:9 (ESV)** ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” God is all wise and God is moving everything to His end. You will sleep better at night acknowledging this. It might even lower your anxiety level and blood pressure.

God the Father gifted us with Jesus. It means more than any sermon can say but it certainly means this. God came in human form, in the flesh and lived amongst us. **3. This means Jesus can fully identify personally with all the joys, pains, sorrows and griefs that are in your life.** Where I grew up, our neighbor had an affair, and a child was conceived. A little girl was born 9 months later. Everyone and I mean everyone knew what occurred. When this little girl came of age in middle school, children began making fun of her parentage. One particular day they were more cruel to her about her beginnings and this young 12 year old girl came home and died of an aneurism.

People knew that Mary was pregnant before she was married. Everything showed. She could not hide the pregnancy. Do you think the old ladies let her forget that? You can hear them whispering about Mary. “I feel so sorry for Joseph.” They don't feel sorry at all. They just like being old biddies gossiping about Mary and Joseph. Jesus' parentage was questioned from the beginning. Tradition has it that Joseph died when Jesus was relatively young, and He had to take over the family business to support his mother and the rest of the family. Jesus was despised, rejected, persecuted and died a tortuous death. There is not one bit of suffering that we experience that touches the excruciating suffering of Jesus. **Hebrews 12:3-4 (NLT2)** ³Think

of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. ⁴
After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin. **Hebrews 5:8 (NLT2)** ⁸
Even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. No one has suffered more than Jesus.

1. **God is always true to His word.**
2. **God knows exactly what He is doing.**
3. **This means Jesus can fully identify personally with all the joys, pains, sorrows and griefs that are in your life.**

Our theme this Advent is God the giver of gifts. God has given to us spiritual gifts. God has gifted us with Himself. And God has gifted us with each other, the church. God has gifted us with Jesus to us to save us from our sins. Since this is absolute truth, our futures are bright. For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son that whosoever believes in Him will not die but have everlasting life. Amen and Amen.