The Promise of Christmas: Each week we are looking at one or more of the OT prophecies…and the Promise it makes

#1: “God Gets It!” And “He Can Do Something About It!”

#2: “God Gives Good Gifts!”

James 1:17: “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.”

Christmas as a kid was different for my family. 90% what we got? Clothes We got a toy or two…but Christmas was about NEED…not WANT. At the time…I didn’t understand how GOOD the gifts were! Looking back I do…so glad

Read with me a prophecy in the book of Isaiah…and lets look together at some of the Good Gifts God Gives!

Isaiah 9:2; 6-7 Page 489

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor…”

This is a promise of the OT that was fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus. In fact, this is the passage Jesus chose to announce the beginning of His public ministry. Lived to age of about 30: Baptism of JB; Temptation in Wilderness: Went Home

Luke 4:14-21 Page 727

Read the Prophecy…THEN He did something amazing…Vs 20: Everyone watching…TODAY FULFILLED!

Two ways I want us to look together at the Good Gifts God Gives us based on this passage.

1. Three Good Gifts God Gives TO Us!

   Luke 4:18-19

   • God gives us the gift of spiritual power through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, Anointed with Holy Spirit: Lit = to rub with oil! Got Jesus ALL over you! Rub with HS so you have spiritual power
   Illus: (Essential Oils) Put stuff on you and it does something…Helps heal, headache pass, protect
   Not only that…but teaching of NT is that not only is He ON you but the HS is IN you!
   ~OT: Came for a specific purpose…anointed to accomplish task, then leave
   ~NT: Comes to live and dwell in you to empower you to live for and serve God
   God not only calls us to live for Him…He empowers us to do that by the presence of HS in our lives! (Wait for HS)

   • God Gives Us Spiritual Purpose! He calls and sends us to those around us that are in desperate need of Him! He has SENT me! (Apostle) Lit = to send out on a mission; to commission and send with a specific task.
   This is part of the amazing relationship we have with Jesus. Not only does He Bless us personally, He also gives us spiritual purpose. He USES us to make an eternal difference in peoples lives!
   In exactly the same way Jesus was sent…He has sent us…to touch people and bring them to God
   Joh 20:21 “Again Jesus said, ’Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.'” Breathed…Receive HS! Think about that! God INVITES You and I into His work! And…He gives us the power to get it done!

   • God Makes Us His Personal Messenger: He has sent me to Preach and Proclaim!
   Sent: Apostle: Herald: Representative of King to announce in public square
   Lit = Preach: Lit = Evangelize: to announce the good news of God forgiveness: Sharing Jesus with others
   Lit = Proclaim: Lit = Herald: to stand in public square and say…God is here! Gods favor available!

   One of what we do is more specific: Evangelize…the other much more generic. Herald: Acceptable Day of the LORD
   We are empowered and sent to do both! Being a part of what God wants to do in our world is one of the amazing Gifts He gives!
   Part of what we do is tell everyone…You can know God! He is actively interested in seeking and finding YOU
   We hear than and we think…I can't do that…I know know the words, I don't know how…I can't find the right way.
   Lk 12:11-12 Don't worry what you will say…HS will give you the words!

   AMAZING OPPORTUNITY: WE SPEAK FOR THE KING OF UNIVERSE: GOOD NEWS!

2. Five Good Gifts God Gives To Others Through Us!

   Luke 4:18-19

As wonderful as it is to get gifts…it is so much better to give them
Our tradition is to gather…bag for wrapping paper and boxes. Take turns opening Gifts.
Boring part, is opening my gifts. Good part…Watching the face of my kids, my wife…when I have given them something GOOD!

Jesus told us that, right? One day when saying Goodbye to church leaders in Ephesus he said: Ac 20:35 “remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'”

• Gives us the opportunity to share Good News of the Gospel with others who need Jesus!
   Anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor! 1 Cor 15: Gospel?
   One of the things I am doing now is spending time young pastors. 2-3 times last week I was with them 1-1 and Group
   Each time I listened first…telling me how hard it is to do what we do…true…Esp Christmas
   Every time I said the exact same thing. We are blessed! We have the privilege of being the point of the spear
   God chose YOU and I to open the door of eternity for others! Sometimes there to pray, sometimes start convo
   Applic: Do you know someone…that needs to hear the Good News of the Gospel? Sent, Empowered, Gifted
• **Gives Us the Opportunity to Heal The Brokenhearted!**
  Heal:  Lit = to make whole, cure to heal
  Brokenhearted:  Lit = crushed, shattered, broken in pieces
Do you know some people that meet that description? Those that have been hurt by life…Or by others….Circumstances
Mt 12:20 “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not put out.”
Not only does He not damage people further…He is in the business of Healing the brokenhearted, Restoring, Renewing!
Think through the people in your life. Who do you know
Illus:  Isn’t that a part of what DivorceCare does? We come along side those who have been crushed, Heartbroken
  We do that with the CityServe and with the Cherished Members ministry, and with the Deacons ministry
  We come along side those that are hurt, broken and struggling. We pray, we help, we encourage, we care

• **Gives us Opportunity to Herald Deliverance To Captive And Bruised**
  ~Announce:  We have the only thing that I KNOW can truly help! We can stand and say with Confidence: JESUS!
  ~Deliverance:  Freedom, Forgiveness, Liberty, Remission
  ~Captives:  Those who have been taken prisoner of war and are held at the point of a spear!
  ~Bruised:  Crushed and beaten down by the battle in their life! To be oppressed and hurt,
Killed in the spirit is the greatest battle. Picture in the bible is of spiritual war taking place for the souls of men and women and boys and girls
I know all kinds of captives! I bet you do too!
Some are totally held captive…some are oppressed and fighting the battle for spiritual, emotional, physical health!
  ~Sin   ~Finances   ~Guilt
  ~Addiction   ~Bad relationships   ~Shame
Illus:  That is what the evil one does with those who want to follow Jesus. Comes alongside and whispers in ear
  Tells them things that are not true! You NEED this, Never Get free, Never be forgiven, Never break power
  But listen…That isn’t true!   Joh 8:36  “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

• **Gives us Opportunity to Herald Restoration of Sight To Blind.**
Certainly in the life of Jesus this was physical…But it is more than that! (Then and Now)
But the reality is…It is also for people who have lost their way…because they are spiritually or emotionally blind
Do you know someone that way? Someone who is entirely unable to see ANY way forward from where they are?
It is possible to have physical sight…and STILL not be able to see…Right?
Mark 8  Jesus teaching spiritual truths…and the Disciples….Just COULDN’T seem to get it!
Mark 8:11  “Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don’t you remember?”
  Applic:  Do you know someone that can’t see today? With Spiritual things they are in total darkness..
  They are so focused on the problem in front of them that they cannot see the Problem Solver
  Issue is not how big the mountain in front of you is, or how large the problem. How big is your God!
  We have the amazing privilege to have God use us to help turn on the lights!

• **To Proclaim The Year of the Lord’s Favor!**
This is the most amazing part of the entire prophecy to me!
We have been sent to stand in the public square and announce…
  GOD IS ON YOUR SIDE!!
That is so different than what our world believes.
  ~He isn’t there   ~He Doesn’t Care
  ~He is Uninvolved   ~He Is Actively Antagonistic
  ~TRUTH:  God is FOR YOU!
Illus:  Hide and seek…Ollie Ollie oxen free: Mutation of “All ye out come in free!”
That’s what we stand in the public square and proclaim! It’s safe to come in!
  Adam and Eve…Hiding in the bushes…It’s safe! It’s Ok….Sin is forgiven…Wrath is satisfied…Door is open…HOME
  Prodigal Son:  Come Home  Run Away From God:  Come Home  Lost Sheep Wandered….Come Home
CONCL:  The Promise of Christmas is that God Gives Good Gifts!  To Us:  Through Us!
  Have you ever been in the position of buying JUST the right gift…way early…put it away…Christmas comes…
  Can’t find it!  The gift is meaningless…Unless it is given!
Same is truth of the Gifts God Gives. It means nothing if it isn’t given away. All those amazing things we described. Pointless
  God has chosen YOU and I to Give His Gifts Away:  Romans Says: How can they believe…if no one tells them
A Couple of Years ago Christmas Eve passed Easter Sunday morning as the time when people most open to be invited to Church
God has some amazing Gifts to Offer. We have Received them ourselves…Now we have the opportunity to give them Away
  God Gives Good Gifts To Us.  AND  God Gives Good Gifts Through Us!
Challenge You…When I was talking about those different kinds of messages…Faces…People…Hurting people came to mind
Take the Cards….Find them this week…Next Week…Hand them out…Invite them….Christmas Eve: Little Things Mean a Lot