

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.”¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (NIV84)

Theme: Jesus: God’s Perfect Gift

1. He is perfect.
2. He makes us perfect.

Did you find it? After going into store after store, after spending countless hours on the internet—did you find it—the perfect Christmas gift? It’s pretty elusive, isn’t it? A lot of things have to happen just right in order to give the perfect Christmas gift. First you have to figure out what the perfect gift is, then you have to find it and make sure it’s within your price range. And finally, the recipient also has to think that it’s the perfect gift. When all of those things come together, it’s quite rare. Some say it doesn’t exist.

But today we see that God has given the whole world a perfect gift in his son, Jesus. It is the perfect gift because he is perfect and he makes us perfect.

The shepherds were hard at work, watching the sheep when suddenly an angel appeared to them. And the glory of God himself shown around them. They were terrified. They were deathly afraid. Why? They were in the presence of holiness. And being in the presence of holiness exposes us for the imposters that we truly are. Have you ever been in a conversation with someone, maybe it was about the stock market or the latest medical procedure — things you have some knowledge about, but you certainly aren’t an expert; when 10 minutes into your conversation you realize you are talking to an expert—an investment banker or a doctor. And fear comes over you—what did I say? How much of a fool did I make out of myself? You are afraid to be exposed as an imposter in front of an expert.

That’s us in front of God when it comes to holiness. God doesn’t just have a head knowledge of holiness. He is holy. And so are his angels. And he demands that we too be holy. He demands that we live perfect lives—obeying all of his Word all of the time. The shepherds were

standing before this holy angel with the glory of the holy God surrounding them. They were terrified in their sins. And so are we.

Do not be afraid, the angel said, **I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.** There is good news to all who lack holiness. That good news is a gift from God. The gift is a baby. As the angel said, that baby **is Christ the Lord.** Lord is the name of the one true God. Jesus is God. This wasn’t just any baby who was born. God became man.

And because he is God, he is perfect. Sure he had a sinful mother. But he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. He wasn’t conceived and born into sin like the rest of us. He was perfect and holy when he was born. And he stayed that way throughout his life. Not once did he sin against God. He was an expert in holiness.

And God became man for the sake of all people. This news of great joy is for all people. For Christ was born for all people. He wasn’t just the Messiah of the Jews. But he is the one promised to save the world from their sins. You included. God became man for you.

Jesus is God’s perfect gift to all people because, as God himself, he is perfect. But we still have a problem. Jesus may be holy, but we’re still sinners.

And like the shepherds we still have fear. Fear that we’ll get what our sins deserve. Fear that we’ll end up in eternal damnation. But that is why God sent his perfect gift, Jesus. But how can Jesus remove fear? How could a baby wrapped in cloths do anything? That’s the way the shepherds found him—lying in a manger. He certainly didn’t look the part. He didn’t look like the son of God or the Promised Messiah. What could that little baby possibly do?

Have you ever given a gift that someone thought was a perfect gift, but you didn’t see it that way? For whatever reason, you didn’t appreciate it as much as you should have. It’s not as if you don’t like it—it’s just not that great in your mind. What do you do with such a gift? You say “thank you,” wear it or play with it, or so on. But you soon get

over it and move on to something else. Isn't that what we often do with the perfect gift that God gives us? Sure we appreciate him now—today on Christmas Eve. And we'll pull him out when we need him—like when we get sick, or a loved one dies. But soon, even as soon as tomorrow morning, we're over it and move on to something else. We often fail to appreciate God's perfect gift to us.

Listen again to the angel's words to the shepherds. **A Savior has been born to you.** Jesus Christ was no ordinary baby. That helpless baby is also our Savior. Over 30 years later, on the cross, he put the sins of the whole world on his shoulders. He became guilty of our sin so that he could suffer through their punishment in our place. And the perfect life that Jesus lived, he gave to us. He clothed us in a garment of his holiness and perfection.

God's gift of his perfect Son is perfect because he makes us perfect. Through faith in him as our Savior, we receive everything he has done for us. And because we are made perfect by Christ, even when we die we will live. On the Last Day he will take you and all believers to live with him in heaven. And in heaven we will have a perfect life—without sin, sorrow, pain, toil, or death. And this perfect life will be eternal. This perfect gift makes us perfect and removes our fear of being in the presence of holiness. For in Christ, our fear—like our sins, have been removed.

You can search the rest of your life for that perfect gift. But the perfect gift has already been given—it was given to you by God on the first Christmas. It's the free gift of his perfect son. And this perfect gift makes us perfect. So this is a gift that we'll never get over, one that we will cherish forever; because he makes us perfect for eternity. Amen.