

ULTIMATE UPGRADE: The Ultimate Christmas Gift

We've been talking about phones & upgrades all school year. Phones are cool & do a lot of things, but there's always a better one out there, right? So imagine if you could get the ultimate upgrade to a phone that is totally indestructible, has unlimited storage & data, never drops calls, always is connected to the wifi & the network, it has all the apps preloaded, all your music preloaded, & on top of it all this ultimate upgrade phone was totally free? Would you want that kind of phone for Christmas?

Now, of course, Christmas is about gifts: giving & receiving them. Plain & simple, Christmas is about God's gift of Jesus to the world, to us! God sent Jesus to all of humanity to restore the most precious relationship that we could have- our eternal relationship with our Maker, God the Father. Perhaps the most famous verse in the Bible is **John 3:16 (CEV)**- *"God loved the people of this world so much that He gave His only Son [Jesus], so that everyone who has faith in Him will have eternal life and never really die."* God's Word explains this more in **Titus 3:7-8 & Eph 2:3-6, 8-10**.

God sent Jesus to destroy the devil's evil work in our lives (**1Jn 3:8b**): sin, lies, anger, sadness, hopelessness, insecurity, rejection, fighting, bitterness, division, slavery, addiction, jealousy, abuse, hurt & pain, war, disease, destruction.

And So Jesus is the Ultimate Christmas Gift. It all started on Christmas 2,000 years ago with Jesus coming to this earth as a little baby to grow up & eventually die on a brutal Roman cross to free us from our sins- the sins that are destroying us & separating us from God. So tonight, we can focus on the material aspects of Christmas: the lights, trees, candy canes & Santa Claus. Or we can receive the Ultimate Gift, Jesus Christ, and the gifts that He brings: peace, joy, hope, love, security, acceptance, forgiveness, freedom, deliverance, guidance, truth, healthy living, healing, purpose, new life & eternal life.

Everybody searches for peace, love, hope, joy, better life, etc. But many people get distracted by all the other shiny things of this world: money, possession, popularity, accomplishments, romance, fame, power, sex to find. But in the end, these all fail to produce peace, love, hope, joy, etc. And the saddest thing of all is that so many people reject the source of all these great things, they reject Jesus, God's free Christmas gift to us all.

So tonight, I ask you, "Do you want any of these things (peace, joy, hope, love, security, acceptance, forgiveness, freedom, deliverance, guidance, truth, healthy living, healing, purpose, new life & eternal life)? If you do, they can only truly be found in Jesus. Jesus, God's Ultimate Christmas gift is available to you, right here, right now. All's you need to do is reach out your hands & take hold of that gift of Jesus (accept the gift of Jesus by faith & trust in Him). It's that simple. Then your new (& eternal) life in Jesus begins. And that's the greatest Christmas gift of all! Jesus is greatest joy of Christmas (**Lk 2:10-11**).

Key Verses

John 3:16 (CEV)- *"God loved the people of this world so much that He gave His only Son [Jesus], so that everyone who has faith in Him will have eternal life and never really die."*

Titus 3:7-8 (MSG) *"Our Savior Jesus poured out new life so generously. God's gift [of Jesus] has restored our relationship with Him and given us back our lives. And there's more life to come—an eternity of life! You can count on this."*

Eph 2:3-6, 8-10 (CEV, NIV) *Once we were also ruled by the selfish desires of our bodies & minds. We had made God angry, and we were going to be punished like everyone else. But God was merciful! We were dead because of our sins, but God loved us so much that He made us alive with Christ & God's wonderful kindness is what saves you. God raised us from death to life with Christ Jesus & He has given us a place beside Christ in heaven. God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. This is God's gift to you, & not anything you have done on your own. It isn't something you have earned, so there is nothing you can brag about. God planned for us to do good things & to live as He has always wanted us to live. That's why He sent Christ to make us what we are.*

1Jn3:8b *The Son of God [Jesus] came for this purpose: to destroy the devil's work.*

Lk 2:10-11 (NLT) *but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"*

Discussion Questions

1. What's on your Christmas list this year?
2. What did you think about the skit? Is it easy to get distracted about the main meaning & message of Christmas?
3. Read **1Jn 3:8b**. The devil wants to ruin us now & forever more, but Jesus wants to give us His peace, joy, hope, love, security, acceptance, forgiveness, freedom, deliverance, guidance, truth, healthy living, healing, purpose, new life & eternal life. What thing(s) on this list do you want in your life? Why do you want them?
5. Read **John 3:16, Titus 3:7-8 & Eph 2:3-6, 8-10** above. Is Jesus our ultimate Christmas gift? Why or why not?
6. Read **Lk 2:10-11**. The Good News is Jesus Christ came on Christmas to save us from sin, eternal hell & give us new, eternal life. Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior by faith? If not, what is holding you back from accepted the Ultimate gift of Jesus?

PRAYER: Father God, thank you so much for your Son, Jesus Christ, our Ultimate Christmas gift. Thank you for His sacrifice for our sins. Thank you for the incredibly good things that Jesus gives us in life: peace, joy, hope, love, security, acceptance, forgiveness, freedom, deliverance, guidance, truth, healthy living, healing, purpose, & new eternal life. We pray that each person here in this group tonight puts their full faith & trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord & Savior. May your Christmas gift of Jesus be our focus as we depart here to celebrate this joyous holiday with our families. We love you God & thank you again for your love for us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.