



CHRISTMAS PERFECT GIFTS : PEACE, JOY, HOPE, FORGIVENESS, LOVE

It was a simple scene that first Christmas – a rough room, a young couple and nothing but a feeding trough to put the child in. It was probably quite cold and, with family far away, there was little help. Not exactly the Hallmark moment we like to show in Christmas pageants. And yet this rustic scene marked the greatest event in the history of mankind.

God's Son became human and came to earth to save us. God had promised to send a Messiah, one who would save His people. He could have easily burst on the scene as a full grown man, a seven foot warrior with fiery eyes and arms of steel. This was what many people were looking for, but it wasn't how God did it. He arrived in the arms of a young girl. He was *"a very small package, wrapped in rags, given from the heart of God. The perfect gift"*

Christmas is meant to celebrate peace and joy. Amidst the busyness of shopping, parties, presents and fun, remember that the Prince of Peace came to spread peace and joy to all who believe in Him.

God gave His only Son to die in our place so that we, in all our brokenness, could know forgiveness. He came so that we could know what love feels like, real love – love that never leaves, love that never disappoints, love that never betrays. He sent His Son into a corrupted world to bring us hope.

The great gifts of this season – or any season – can't be put under the tree; you can't wear them or eat them or drive them or play with them. We spend so much time on the lesser gifts – toys, sweaters, jewelry, and chocolate of Christmas – and so little on the great gifts – understanding, grace, peace and forgiveness. It's no wonder that the holiday leaves us empty, because when it's over, the only reminders we have are the dirty dishes and the January bills.

Let us remember that the Christmas heart is a giving heart, a wide open heart that thinks of others first. The birth of the baby Jesus stands as the most significant event in all history, because it has meant the pouring into a sick world of the healing medicine of love which has transformed all manner of hearts for almost two thousand years... Underneath all the bulging bundles is this beating Christmas heart. --*Matthew Adams*

Christmas, children, is not a date. It is a state of mind. -- *Mary Ellen Chase*

Are you willing to believe that love is the strongest thing in the world - stronger than hate, stronger than evil, stronger than death - and that the blessed life which began in Bethlehem nineteen hundred years ago is the image and brightness of the Eternal Love? Then you can celebrate Christmas. -- *Henry Van Dyke*

The joy of brightening other lives, bearing each others' burdens, easing other's loads and supplanting empty hearts and lives with generous gifts becomes for us the magic of Christmas. -- *W. C. Jones*

How are you doing this Christmas?

Are you having a hard time finding hope in the world? Are you having a hard time finding peace? It doesn't have to be that way. You can have peace and find hope and know forgiveness through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

You can receive Christ right now by faith through prayer. Praying is simply talking to God. God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. Here's a suggested prayer:

Lord Jesus, I want to know You personally. Thank You for coming to this world and dying on the cross for my sins. I open the door of my life to You and ask You to come in as my Saviour and Lord. Take control of my life. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Bring peace to my world this Christmas. Make me the kind of person You want me to be.

