

The Best Present Part 1 Teaching Guide

INTRODUCTION

I'm so glad you're here! We're kicking off a Christmas series and I have to tell you...I love Christmas! I love Christmas movies, Christmas decorations, and of course, Christmas cookies! What's not to love?!

[Leader Note: Feel free to make this moment personal by talking about what you love about the Christmas season or maybe even ask your group what they love!]

There's just one problem: we run the risk of missing Jesus in the midst of all of the fun Christmas stuff. And what a shame that would be! We'd be missing the whole point!

We're here to talk about The Best Present. I'm not talking about that one magical gift you got as a kid—the bicycle, the dollhouse, or the video game that made you light up. I'm not even talking about the best gift you've given to someone else. I'm talking about a Gift that has been at the heart of our faith for over 2,000 years: Jesus Christ.

You've heard it before—Jesus is the reason for the season. Christmas is usually filled with conversations with gifts under the tree, but today we're going to talk about how Jesus is The Best Gift. Specifically, we're asking the question: “Who is He giving it to?”

TRANSITION

[Leader Note: When I teach this, I made a comment about how this is the most memorized/quoted verse in the Bible in my experience. I talked about how it was the first verse I memorized as a kid and how I truly didn't recognize its depth until later. Feel free to express something from your own story as it relates to this verse.]

Let's start with the basics. The apostle John tells us in John 3:16 (ESV), *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."*

Jesus is the ultimate gift from God, one that meets our deepest need—a need for redemption, reconciliation, and hope. Sometimes, we act like this verse is part of a limited-time offer. We assume that this gift is reserved for some special group of people—the spiritually elite or something like that. We picture Jesus as a gift wrapped in velvet, given only to a select few.

But if you've spent any time at all reading about Jesus, you know He didn't come wrapped in velvet. He came wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger, surrounded by the smell of animals.

Jesus, this precious gift, was given to people who, in many ways, had absolutely no qualifications to receive Him. And yet, God in His infinite grace chose to gift His Son to the world. The world. Not just part of it. Not just those who have their lives together. Not just the well-dressed, well-mannered, or well-spoken.

So, let's break this down further. What kind of people can receive this gift?

POINT #1
Jesus is giving this gift to the poor in spirit.

The first recipients of this precious gift are the poor in spirit. Jesus Himself declares this. In Matthew 5:3 (ESV), He said, *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

Now, what does it mean to be poor in spirit? It's not about your bank account balance or whether you have a pantry full of organic groceries. Being poor in spirit means recognizing your own spiritual poverty.

It means understanding that, apart from God, you're spiritually bankrupt. You have nothing to offer that could earn God's love or favor.

Think about the Christmas story for a moment. Jesus' birth was first announced to shepherds. Not royalty. Not religious leaders. Shepherds. These were guys who worked long nights in fields, smelling of sheep, and they probably weren't the most polished of folks. Yet, they were the ones who received the good news directly from heaven.

Luke 2:11 (ESV) says, *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

What does that tell us? It tells us that Jesus is given to those who know they need Him. We needed a SAVIOR! If you're here today feeling empty, broken, or like you just can't measure up—guess what? You're exactly the kind of person Jesus came for. You are who God had in mind. He loves you that much!

POINT #2

Jesus is giving this gift to the weary and heavy-laden.

Let's keep going. Jesus says in Matthew 11:28 (ESV), *"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* How many of us feel weary and burdened, especially during the holidays? We're exhausted from carrying loads we were never meant to bear—burdens of guilt, anxiety, unmet expectations, or the constant drive to prove ourselves.

If that's you, hear this: Jesus is the gift given to the weary. He didn't come for people who have it all together. He didn't enter this world so we could add one more item to our to-do lists. He came to give us rest. Real rest. Rest for our souls.

I think about Mary and Joseph, trudging into Bethlehem, worn out and rejected. Mary, super pregnant, faced the indignity of giving birth in a stable because there was no room for them anywhere else. Talk about weary! And yet, it was in that moment, that messy, unglamorous moment, that God chose to enter the world.

If you're feeling worn down by life—if you're tired of the weight you've been carrying—remember, Jesus was born for you. The King of kings left His throne to meet you in your exhaustion, to lift your burdens, and to carry you.

POINT #3
Jesus is giving this gift to the lost and wandering.

The next group of recipients? The lost. Those who have strayed far from the fold.

In Luke 19:10 (ESV), Jesus says, ***“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*** How incredible is that? Jesus didn't just wait for the lost to find Him; He went looking for them.

Consider the Magi, those wise men from the East. They were outsiders, Gentiles, astrologers following a star in search of something—someone—they didn't fully understand. Yet, God led them to the humble home where the Christ child lay. They traveled great distances, spiritually and physically wandering, yet God drew them to Himself.

You might feel lost today. Maybe you've wandered from your faith, or perhaps you've never felt like you had a spiritual home to begin with. You might think you've strayed too far for God to ever find you. But here's the beautiful truth: Jesus is the gift given to those who are lost.

He's the shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to find the one. He's the light that shines in our darkness.

And let's be honest—haven't we all felt lost at some point? We've all made decisions that led us into places of confusion and regret. But the heart of God is one of relentless pursuit. Jesus didn't come to condemn the lost; He came to save them. He came to save you.

POINT #4

Jesus is giving this gift to the sinners and the broken.

Let's look at one more group today: the sinners and the broken. In Mark 2:17, Jesus says (NLT), *"Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."*

The Christmas story, at its core, is not about perfection. It's about grace. Jesus didn't come to pat righteous people on the back. He came to heal, restore, and redeem the broken.

Think about the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1. It's filled with people who had seriously messed-up lives. Rahab was a prostitute, David was an adulterer and a murderer, and Judah fathered Perez through his own daughter-in-law, Tamar, under scandalous circumstances. Yet, God chose to weave their stories into His story of redemption. Jesus is the gift given to sinners because sinners are the ones who need saving.

Maybe you walked in today carrying the weight of your past. You're haunted by mistakes, addictions, or moments of failure. You think, "Why would God want anything to do with someone like me?" But Jesus didn't come to shame sinners; He came to save them. He came to rewrite their stories with His grace.

APPLICATION: The Heart of God's Gift

So, who is Jesus giving this gift to? He's giving it to the poor in spirit, the weary and burdened, the lost, and the broken. And that means He's giving it to everyone. We all fall into that category.

Luke 2:10 (ESV) says, *"And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'"*

This is my favorite verse during Christmas because it sums the whole story up for me: Good news. Great joy. All people.

In one way or another, we all fit that description.

Poor in spirit.

Weary.

Heavy-laden.

Lost.

Wandering.

Sinners.

Broken.

We all need Him! This isn't a gift you earn; it's a gift you receive with open hands and an open heart.

As we enter this Christmas season, let's not forget the miracle of God's generosity. Jesus came for everyone—every tribe, tongue, and nation. He came for people who would never have made it onto the guest list of a royal palace. He came for you and for me, with all our baggage and imperfections. That is the best present.

CLOSING

Let's take a moment now to reflect. Are you feeling spiritually poor today? Do you need rest from the burdens you're carrying? Have you wandered away, or are you lost in your own confusion? Or are you sitting here, broken by sin, wondering if there's hope for you? The answer is yes. The gift of Jesus is for you. Will you receive it? Let's pray.

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