



Giving & Receiving

What do you like more at Christmas - giving gifts, or receiving them?

Looking back to when I was a boy, I don't think I had any concept of giving gifts, but I sure loved receiving them and opening those presents at Christmas!

One of the special blessings we always had as a family was receiving a large parcel from my grandmother in Germany. Because it would come by ship and was posted a few months before Christmas, we would never know exactly which day it would come, but there was always excitement whenever we saw the post-van stop outside the house!

But now that I am older, I have found that I have changed a lot. Things have reversed, and I now much prefer to give gifts than to receive them. I especially love to give where I see a need; I love to bless and see people happy and smiling and feeling special. The love and thankfulness that is created makes my day, and nothing compares to it!

I can fully understand what the Bible means when Paul says: "In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak,

remembering the words the Lord Jesus Himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

The very first Christmas, God gave a gift to the whole world, because He saw the need we were in. It is written: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

You see, God has set a day in which He will judge the world (Acts 17:31). Every single person who has ever lived, including you and me, will stand before God in judgement and have to give an account of everything we have ever done - whether good or bad (Matthew 12:36).

But God knows that we have all done bad, and the penalty for that is eternal death in hell (Revelation 21:8). He also knows that none of us can do anything



for ourselves to 'undo' this penalty (Romans 3:19,20).

So God had a plan. And that was to get His Son Jesus to take the penalty of death and hell for us, so that God could justly forgive all of us who put our faith in Jesus! (Romans 3:23-26)

The real meaning of Christmas, therefore, is that God sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour, to save us from our sins. That's fantastic!

There is one catch, however.

You must receive this gift.

You must admit that you need it, and reach out and accept it. If you say, "I don't need this gift from God; I'm alright" or "I don't like it; I wish I got something else", then you won't get to enjoy its benefits. If you don't accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour and Lord, then you will not be forgiven of your sins, and you will not go to heaven.

Giving gifts can of course be stressful. Sometimes it is very hard to know what the other person really would like to have! And then there's the stress of wondering whether or not what you have bought or made will really make them happy!

Have you ever experienced giving a gift to someone, and they did not like it? Especially when you spent so much

time and effort to find something you thought would be just perfect for them? It's a very embarrassing situation, I can tell you!

Sometimes, of course, we know what a person really would like, but we can't give it to them because we haven't got enough money, or it's not within our power to give it; or perhaps even more significantly, we know we shouldn't give it to them because either they're too young or immature to handle it, or because it would actually be bad for them.

I wonder how God must feel if we reject what He is offering us?

Remember, this is a gift from Someone who really does know what we really do need, and has designed it so that it won't break the first time we play with it, and so that it can give us the maximum enjoyment we could ever hope to experience from a gift!

Jesus Christ really is the best gift anyone could ever hope to receive. Through Him we receive:

- a) Forgiveness of sins and guilt;
- b) New power for living a joyful life;
- c) A brand new outlook on life;
- d) Assurance that you will go to heaven when you die;
- e) Someone to turn to no matter what is happening in your life.

The list could go on and on!

Please accept this gift! I *urge* you to, if you haven't already. I want to see you enjoying the abundant life God wants you to have, and I want to see you in heaven with me.

This Christmas, what do you *really* need? God is reaching out again to you, saying "I love you. I want to forgive you. Will you let me into your life? Will you accept my gift of my Son Jesus?" Receive Him. Receive this present, and just watch the blessings flow all around!!

Let us pray:

Dear God,

thank you so much for sending your Son Jesus to be my Saviour, to save me from my sins.

I worship You, Lord, and I praise You, and I am just so happy that You love me and that I will now be spending eternity in heaven with You, because of Jesus.

I hope and pray that many others living around me will accept this gift, too. Please help them to believe in Jesus as well.

In Jesus' name I pray,

Amen.



Peter Kutschker

**Community Chaplain, East Preston /
Reservoir** (03) 8430 8574

5/3 McLennan Place, Preston, 3072

A ministry supported by Regent Baptist Church
and LinC Northern Region

Summary of last month's church service

"The Good Life"

The Good Life is experienced when we make sure we have a healthy diet and are getting enough exercise. But health goes far beyond just the BODY; it includes MENTAL health and SPIRITUAL health, and each area can affect the other!! Modern science confirms the wisdom from the Bible: "**A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.**" (Proverbs 14:30)

(You do have a spirit, you know. Remember those times when you have had a 'gut feeling' that something is right or wrong? - that's your spirit talking to you).

We need to feed and exercise every area of our life well:

BODY: minimize the junk food & self-indulgence; maximize the vegetables & fruit, being content with what you have, exercise, and serving others.

SOUL: minimize the T.V. and bad company; maximize good conversation, being humble & gentle, listening to others, and solving problems.

SPIRIT: minimize selfishness; maximize reading the Bible, praying, listening to Christian music, and exercising faith in God.

Remember: invest time and money to feed and exercise all three aspects of your life well!



You are invited to a ...

Christmas Service with Carol singing

**Sunday 19th
December
5pm – 6.15pm**

**Preston Nth East
Primary School Hall**



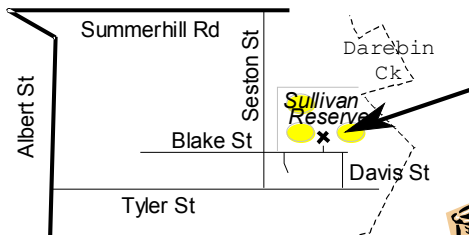
PLUS , special surprises for the kids!!
ALL WELCOME



Christmas Day under the gum trees"

Saturday 25th December, 2004

Sullivan Reserve Sports Pavilion, Blake St, Reservoir (Mel. 19 D9)



11.30 - 12.00 *Christmas Carol singing*
12.00 onwards *Picnic BBQ lunch*

You are most welcome!

*RSVP: Wednesday, 22nd December. Phone (03) 8430 8574

ALL WELCOME