

The Christ Tree

Introduction:

1. It is always a big event at our house when we put up the Christmas tree.
2. But this morning I would like to read a verse about another very unique and distinctive tree. Not a Christmas tree, but simply a “Christ tree.” 1 Peter 2:21-24
 - In this passage, the cross of Jesus Christ is referred to as a tree.
cf. Acts 13:29
3. This is the Christmas season when we commemorate the birth of Christ, but Jesus was born to die. He knew this and conveyed it to His disciples (Luke 18:31-33). They didn't grasp this truth, and I'm saddened when I see so many other people that do not comprehend this truth.
4. Multitudes will erect Christmas trees this year and ornately decorate them, yet have no comprehension of the Christ tree and what was accomplished on that cross.
5. But this morning we are not going to be in that category. We will examine three simple truths about the Christ tree.

First, the Christ tree had something hung upon it.

1. At our house it is a big tradition for all of us to garnish the tree with ornaments from years gone by. We have ornaments from our first year of marriage through present day.
2. But 2,000 years ago a tree was erected on a hill called Mt. Calvary. This tree didn't just have an ornament hung upon it. It actually had a person hung upon it. This person, of course, was Jesus Christ. Acts 5:30
3. When He was hung on that tree, people were not gathered around singing, “ ’Tis the season to be jolly...” They were full of rage and fury. Pilate was about to release Jesus, but the angry mob was shouting, “Crucify Him, crucify Him!”
4. You may wonder, “I thought Jesus was sinless and perfect, always helping others. Why was He hung on that tree and killed? What was the purpose?”
5. When the angel told Joseph about the birth of Jesus, the angel gave us the answer to that question. Matthew 1:21; cf. 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 3:5
 - Christ died as a sinless sacrifice to pay our sin debt. Romans 3:23
 - Jesus was paying sin's price because sin must be paid for, and the price is death. Romans 6:23
6. **Illustration:** Imagine going into the store, picking out a bike and rolling it out of the store without paying for it. Someone would stop you, put some bracelets on you, and take you to a nice, cozy jail cell. You look at the policeman and say, “But I go to church. I was baptized,” etc. Bottom line: You can't go through that store's door without paying the price for that bike. People think they can go through the door of heaven without having their sin paid for, but it will not be allowed.

Second, the Christ tree was elevated for others to look upon.

1. When we set up our tree, that night we turn off the lights and sit on the couch or floor and just gaze upon it and say, "Isn't it beautiful?"
2. Had you been there 2,000 years ago when the Christ tree was erected on Mt. Calvary, it wouldn't have been a comely sight to look upon (no lights, tinsel, or ornaments).
 - Jesus was beaten and mutilated to the point that He no longer looked human. His body was covered with sinless blood. It was a gruesome and violent death.
3. But looking back now upon that tree, we know what a blessed sight it was. We know now what was accomplished. Forgiveness was made possible through that precious blood that was shed that day. Colossians 1:14
4. Now we must look in faith to the One who died on that tree and rose again. John 3:14-15
 - Just like the brazen serpent, Jesus was lifted up on that tree at Calvary. We too must look away from ourselves (our works, religion, rituals) and look in faith to the One who died for us. And when we do, we don't just merely receive life, but eternal life.
5. Do you ever recall putting your total faith and trust in Jesus Christ and what He did for you on that Christ tree? God simply desires your faith resting in what Christ did for you.

Third, the Christ tree has some wonderful gifts associated with it.

1. When you look in faith to the One who died for you on that tree, you receive some wonderful, imperishable gifts that cannot be purchased with money.
 - Let's turn to Romans 5 and see this. vs. 15 (free gift), 16, 17, 18
2. God has some gifts He wants to bestow upon you, but they are all at the foot of the Christ tree. If you read Romans 5:15-21, you will soon discover that you cannot receive one gift from God apart from His Son, Jesus Christ.
3. When you look in faith and trust Christ to be your Savior, you will discover and unwrap some astonishing and priceless gifts from the hand of God.

You will find the gift of peace - vs. 1

- Do you know that you are at peace with God? Do you know that you are His child and that you have an eternal relationship with Him?
- Do you want that peace? How do you get it? Notice verse 1. "*Through our Lord Jesus Christ.*"
- You have to look to the Christ tree. When you do, the sin barrier is removed from between you and God, and you are brought into an eternal place of peace with God.

You will find the gift of complete access to God - vs. 2

- How would you like to be able to talk to God at any time and know that He is listening attentively to your every word?
- You can, but this gift only comes through Christ. Ephesians 2:18, 3:12

You will find the gift of God's love - vs. 8

- When Jesus died on the Christ tree, God was proclaiming from the portals of glory, "I love you."
 - If you want to know God's eternal, deep, abiding love, you will find it in Jesus Christ - a love that will never change. Romans 8:35-39
4. What wonderful, priceless gifts we discover at the foot of the Christ tree! There are so many others, we don't have time to discuss them all. You can experience them for yourself and unwrap and discover these heavenly gifts. How? By simply looking to the One who died on that Christ tree for your sins.
 5. Why don't you place your total faith and trust in what Christ accomplished on that cross for you?
 6. These gifts are free to us, but they don't come cheap. They cost Jesus His life. Will you turn in faith today to Jesus Christ and allow God to give you the gift of eternal life?