

Christmas is known for giving and receiving gifts. Kids open their gifts on Christmas day. Some are happy. When kids are disappointed, sometimes they will throw tantrums. Adults, on the other hand, are good at hiding their disappointments. All of us have experienced getting disappointed with the gift that we have received.

However, Our God is great at giving gifts. God gives us gifts that we truly need. Often, God gives us what we need and not what we want.

Romans 15:13 - “May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (NIV).” Romans 15:13 says that you may overflow with hope. Some of you may not be overflowing with hope. You’re not even excited this Christmas season. Maybe, your 2022 is not as good as you have hoped it to be. So you want it to end as soon as possible.

Some of you graduated this year, but the job is tough. You can’t land a well-paying job because the economy is not good. Some of you are praying for a miracle, for healing. Some of you just broke up with your boyfriend or girlfriend. You’re not able to move on. Some of you are hoping that you’ll have a child this year. Some are praying for financial breakthroughs.

Others are hoping that their loved one will get well, yet he or she is now home with the Lord. Whenever you see an empty chair at home, you feel tremendous pain. You’re going to miss their laugh. You’re going to miss their jokes. You’re surely going to miss their call or text. Life this year is not what you hoped it would be. Christmas will no longer be the same again.

How can we have hope if we have all these burdens in our hearts? How can we be hopeful if there’s heaviness inside us?

Do you know that it’s a documented fact that more people struggle with discouragement and depression during the Christmas season than at any other time of the year? According to a survey, many people dread Christmas because they’re reminded of a lost loved one, a lost job, a painful divorce, or unrealized dreams. So what can we do to get through these holiday blues? It’s just one word. It’s the word HOPE.

Hope is the essential ingredient for a joyful and abundant life. This is the kind of life Jesus wants for us. Proverbs 13:12 “Hope that is put off makes one sick at heart. But a desire that is met is like a tree of life.” (NIRV) We all need hope. Hope is a powerful force in the human heart. But it can disappear so fast especially in the Christmas season when you’re alone and when you're broken.

For some of you, things are not ok right now. But I believe that True and lasting hope is available to everyone and it can be attained through an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus is more than just a baby born more than 2000 years ago in Bethlehem. There’s something different about the Christ child. And when you discover those differences, you’ll be surprised by hope.

700 years before Jesus was born, a prophet described the qualities of a coming Savior. Isaiah 9:6 - “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (NIV).” These four qualities describe the coming Savior who we know to be none other than Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the Son of God who was born 2000 years ago. And we put our faith in Him. With the qualities mentioned in Isaiah 9:6, you’ll be surprised to have hope. So let us take a look at them. The first quality mentioned by Isaiah is…

**WONDERFUL COUNSELOR**

Jesus, as my Counselor, guides me because He loves me. Jesus doesn’t need counselors or advisors since He’s a God who’s all-knowing. Jesus knows everything (1 John 3:20). So if He is our Wonderful Counselor, aren’t we blessed to have an all-knowing God to guide us? Jesus knows not only the tiniest details of our lives but also those of everything around us. Time and time again, I always remind you of these things. He mentions even knowing when a sparrow falls or when we lose a single hair. Not only does God know everything that will happen until the end of history itself, but He also knows our very thoughts, even before we can even speak. He knows our hearts from afar; He even saw us in the womb.

Through the Bible, we can acquire wisdom and know what we should do in our specific situation. Do you have problems with relationships? Do you have problems with your job or business? Do you have problems with your health? Do you have problems with your finances? I’m not exaggerating, but every wisdom that we need is already here in the Bible. All the advice that we need is already in the Bible.

Jesus said in John 15:15, “I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you (NIV).” Think about a friend who’s willing to sacrifice for you. This is why we have categories in relation to friendship. We have friends, close friends, and best friends. But Jesus is our best friend. Why? We are 100% sure that Jesus is not going to leave or abandon us. As a friend, Jesus is going to do everything that He can do to assist us in our difficult situations. If Jesus is willing to lay down His life for us, He is willing to help us in our troubles. As a friend, as a Savior, as our God, Jesus’ love for us is so enormous that it can’t be measured.

**MIGHTY GOD**

Jesus, as Almighty God, is in control of all things. One of the attributes of God that are comforting whenever we have problems is His sovereignty. Nothing happens in your life that is outside of His knowledge and control. God is aware of the good, the bad, and the ugly things that happened in your life. And He is working behind the scenes. Just a caution: Jesus doesn’t cause the bad and the ugly things in your life. But He allows them in order to grow our faith and mature our character. God allows us to go through troubles so that we can become more and more like Christ. Remember this: There can be no TRANSFORMATION without TRIBULATION.

Another attribute of God that is comforting whenever I’m in trouble is God’s omnipotence. Omnipotence means that God is all-powerful. His power is seen in the miracles He performed in numerous healings, the feeding of the five thousand, calming of the storm, and the ultimate display of power, raising Lazarus and Jairus’s daughter from the dead, an example of His control over life and death. Death is the ultimate reason that Jesus came - to destroy it and to bring sinners into a right relationship with God.

Therefore, whatever is happening in your life, you can be confident that Jesus as a mighty God is in full control. Jesus has all authority, all power to hold your entire life. Colossians 1:17 describes Jesus as “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (NIV).” Friends, Not only did Jesus create the universe, but He also sustains it.

Here’s the mind-blowing truth: If Jesus can hold the universe together, your problem is easy for God. There’s nothing that can happen in your life that is outside the power of Jesus. God can take care of you.

**EVERLASTING FATHER**

Jesus, as everlasting Father, keeps His promises. When my kids were young, they kept on asking for things. What’s special about kids is that when you say YES to them, they will remember and they’ll surely claim that YES or promise from you. All parents can relate to this. Broken promises break the hearts of people. No parent wants to do that to their children.

God’s Word says, “I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5). God’s word says, “Do not fear, for I am with you...I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10). God says, “For I know the plans I have for you,...plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).

Joshua said in Joshua 21:45 - “Not one of all the Lord’s good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled (NIV).” Friends, God’s Word never fails, it is absolutely trustworthy. God will never fail to do exactly what He has promised. God is a good father. If I will not break my promises to my precious children, God will not break His promises to us.

**PRINCE OF PEACE**

Jesus, as the Prince of Peace, has made peace between God and men. So it means that God has made peace between you and God. In our sinful state, we are enemies with God (Romans 5:10). But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8). Because of Christ’s sacrifice, we are restored to a relationship of peace with God (Romans 5:!). This is the deep, abiding peace between our hearts and our Creator that cannot be taken away (John 10:27-28) and the ultimate fulfillment of Christ’s work as “Prince of Peace.”

Our reconciliation with God allows us to have a relationship with the Holy Spirit. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is peace. No matter what hardships we are faced with, we can ask for peace that comes from the powerful love of God that is not dependent on our own strength or the situation around us. Therefore, we can have hope.

**LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:**

1) Have you ever encountered a circumstance where you believed all hope was lost? Who or what do you find yourself relying on the most to get through it?

2) When life is going well, is it easy to hope and trust God? What about when you are going through something painful? Do you believe he is stronger than anything you will ever face? Share your view with the group.