

**SERIES: The Christ of Christmas
“The Gift of God”
John 3:16**

Big Idea – Jesus Christ is the gift of God that truly keeps on giving.

Bobby was getting cold sitting out in his back yard in the snow. He didn't wear boots; he didn't like them, and anyway he didn't own any. The thin sneakers he wore had a few holes in them, and they did a poor job of keeping out the cold. Bobby had been in his backyard for about an hour already, and, try as he might, he could not come up with an idea for his mother's Christmas gift.

He shook his head as he thought, "This is useless. Even if I do come up with an idea, I don't have any money." Ever since his father had passed away three years ago, the family of five had struggled. It wasn't because his mother didn't care or try. There just never seemed to be enough. She worked nights at the hospital, but the wages that she was earning could only be stretched so far. What the family lacked in money and things, however, they more than made up for in love.

Bobby had two older and one younger sister, who ran the household in their mother's absence. All three of his sisters had already made beautiful gifts for their mother. Somehow it just wasn't fair. Here it was Christmas Eve already, and he had nothing. Wiping a tear from his eye, Bobby kicked the snow and started to walk down to the street where the shops and stores were. It wasn't easy being six without a father, especially when he needed him to talk to.

Bobby walked from shop to shop, looking into each decorated window. Everything seemed so beautiful and so out of reach. It was starting to get dark, and Bobby reluctantly turned to walk home when suddenly his eyes caught the glimmer of the setting sun's rays reflecting off of something along the curb. He reached down and discovered a shiny dime. Never before has anyone felt so wealthy as Bobby felt at that moment. As he held his treasure, a warmth spread throughout his entire body, and he walked into the first store he saw. His excitement quickly turned cold when the salesperson told him that he couldn't buy anything with only a dime.

He saw a flower shop and went inside to wait in line. When the shop owner asked if he could help him, Bobby presented the dime and asked if he could buy one flower for his mother's Christmas gift. The shop owner looked at Bobby and

his ten-cent offering. Then he put his hand on Bobby's shoulder and said to him, "You just wait here, and I'll see what I can do for you."

As Bobby waited he looked at the beautiful flowers and even though he was a boy, he could see why mothers and girls liked them.

The sound of the door closing as the last customer left, jolted Bobby back to reality. All alone in the shop, Bobby began to feel alone and afraid. Suddenly the shop owner came out and moved to the counter. There, before Bobby's eyes, lay twelve long stem, red roses, with leaves of green and tiny white flowers all tied together with a big silver bow.

Bobby's heart sank as the owner picked them up and placed them gently into a long white box. "That will be ten cents young man." the shop owner said reaching out his hand for the dime. Slowly, Bobby moved his hand to give the man his dime.

Could this be true? No one else would give him a thing for his dime! Sensing the boy's reluctance, the shop owner added, "I just happened to have some roses on sale for ten cents a dozen. Would you like them?"

This time Bobby did not hesitate. When the man placed the long box into his hands, he knew it was true. Walking out the door, he heard the shop keeper say, "Merry Christmas, son."

As he returned inside, the shopkeeper's wife walked out. "Who were you talking to back there, and where are the roses you were fixing?"

Staring out the window and blinking the tears from his own eyes, he replied, "A strange thing happened to me this morning. While I was setting up things to open the shop, I thought I heard a voice telling me to set aside a dozen of my best roses for a special gift. I wasn't sure at the time whether I had lost my mind or what, but I set them aside anyway. Then just a few minutes ago, a little boy came into the shop and wanted to buy a flower for his mother with one small dime.

"When I looked at him, I saw myself, many years ago. I too, was a poor boy with nothing to buy a Christmas gift for my mother. A bearded man, whom I never knew, stopped me on the street and told me that he wanted to give me ten dollars.

"When I saw that little boy tonight, I knew that was God's voice, and I put together a dozen of my very best roses." The shop owner and his wife hugged

each other tightly, and as they stepped out into the bitter cold air, they felt God's peace flooding over their souls in a new and special way.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Martin Luther called John 3:16 "the heart of the Bible—the Gospel in miniature."

"God" . . . The greatest LOVER – He loves you with unconditional love.

"So loved" . . . The greatest DEGREE

"The world" . . . The greatest NUMBER

"That he gave" . . . The greatest ACT

"His only begotten Son" . . . The greatest GIFT

"That whosoever" . . . The greatest INVITATION

"Believes" . . . The greatest SIMPLICITY

"In him" . . . The Greatest PERSON

"Should not" . . .the Great CERTAINTY

"Perish" . . . The greatest DELIVERANCE

"But" . . . The greatest DIFFERENCE

"Have" . . . The greatest POSSESSION

"Everlasting Life" . . . The greatest GIFT

God says, "I offer to you forgiveness for your past, peace of mind in the present, and a solid future in eternity." Those are the gifts.

How do you find those gifts? They are all wrapped up in Christ.

"You will find Me when you seek Me with all your heart."

You matter to God. Your problems matter to God. Your pain matters to God. Your potential matters to God.

He came to earth and He's seeking you while you're seeking Him.

What better time than Christmas to make contact. He says, Seek for Me. Two thousand years ago wise men sought Christ. Wise men still seek Christ. I challenge you to be a wise man or a wise woman and this Christmas seek Christ, because "Seek and you will find." That's His promise. That's His gift to you.

The wages, penalty, payment for sin is death – Christ paid your penalty (if you want Him to)

But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have you received the gift of God, eternal life, in Jesus Christ the Savior?