



“Worship, Part 2” (Selected Scriptures)

Danny Hodges – TS2471

Intro: Christmas Eve we will focus the message on the tremendous gift God gave the world by sending His Son to be our Savior. But this weekend the focus is more on gifts we have the privilege of giving to God in response all he has done for us. Wise men travelled a great distance to worship the one born King of the Jews. Matthew’s gospel says they “bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and **presented him with gifts** of gold and of incense and of myrrh. Last weekend we looked at a woman named Mary doing the same thing. She broke an alabaster container filled with expensive perfume, anointed Jesus with it, then wiped his feet with her hair. This perfume was her dowry, and what she did was a very intimate and personal gesture. There was nothing sexual or immoral in her actions. She was in essence offering herself to Jesus, and saying that she did not want anything or anyone to come in between her and her Savior. The apostles rebuked her, suggesting that what she did was wasteful, that the perfume could have been sold for more than a year’s wages and the money given to the poor. But Jesus came to her defense, and He was pleased with her offering, her gift if you will.

Read again from *The Air I Breathe*, chapter one.

Follow the trail of your time, energy, affections, and money, and there you find a throne. And whatever or whoever is on that throne is the object of your worship. When we worship the Lord we are offering something to the Lord. This Christmas, as we spend time and money offering one another all kinds of gifts, let’s consider what we might give to the Lord. As we do so, consider this verse:

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

God is the perfect gift giver. His **greatest** gift is what Christmas is all about. Have you ever stopped to think about this gift? Ever tried to fool somebody by putting a small present in a big box, or an expensive present in a box with very unimpressive wrapping? He wasn’t trying to fool anyone, but no one expected the gift of salvation to be wrapped the way God wrapped it – a baby in a manger, born to very poor parents. Isaiah tells us that there was nothing about Jesus that would attract us to him, so he was not a GQ kinda kid. And nobody imagined that this baby was born for one purpose – to die. And not just die, but suffer one of the most cruel deaths anyone could – death on a Roman cross. Why would the Father allow His one and only Son to die in this way? And why would Jesus be willing? John 3:16 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. God has given the world a perfect gift, and one that meets our greatest need.

My wife is like God in that way. She repeatedly has amazed me at how she can think of what someone really needs, and what they will be pleased with as well. Examples?

While my wife is a great gift giver, I am not at all! I think I’ve gotten better over the years, but I’ve had to learn from her, and I’m a slow learner!

I have at times given my wife what I thought she needed, but it turned out to be something she was not very pleased with. I think it was our first anniversary, and it crept up upon me rather suddenly. We lived in the Peppertree Village apartments on 9th street at the time, and when I realized it was our anniversary I shot down to K-Mart right up the street, began to browse the women's dept., ended up in the jewelry section, and thought about buying her earrings. The salesperson began to ask me what kind of earrings my wife liked, what kind she wore, and for the life of me I could not get one image in my mind of Wendy with earrings on. I just did not know. Then I made my way to the women's clothing section, looking at several items, but I did not know what size my wife wore, or what she might like. Eventually I ended up in Sporting Goods, and it suddenly hit me that my wife was playing softball on the Calvary Chapel softball team, and she needed a new glove. A perfect gift I thought, so that's what I gave her. On my birthday she returned the compliment by giving me a pair of binoculars, on the only night I have ever been to an opera. We sat in the nosebleed section, and she used my binoculars all night!

If you were to give God a gift, do you know what He would be pleased with?

Ephesians 5:8-10 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light...**and find out what pleases the Lord.**

Thought: God doesn't need anything. See Acts 17:24-25. Some might argue that, since God does not need anything, He therefore does not care about receiving gifts. But this is not true at all. Ex.23: 15 "Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in that month you came out of Egypt. **"No one is to appear before me empty-handed"**; Ex.34:20; Deut.16: 16 Three times a year all your men must appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks and the Feast of Tabernacles. **No man should appear before the LORD empty-handed:** 17 Each of you must bring **a gift** in proportion to the way the LORD your God has blessed you.

GIFTS GIVEN BY FAITH

- Heb.11:1, 6
- Whatever gift I offer, no matter how big or small, I must believe that God is keenly aware of what I am offering Him.
- Matthew 10:42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward.

MY BEST

- Malachi 1:6-14
- Sometimes we treat God like we do The Salvation Army or Goodwill. Things that have little value or use to us we give to the Lord. That's what was happening in Malachi's day. In contrast, the Magi who came to worship Jesus brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were gifts worthy of a king. It was the same with Mary who anointed Jesus with the expensive perfume and afterward wiped his feet with her hair. She offered Jesus the best she had.
- Read from Living Above The Level of Mediocrity

FINANCIAL GIFTS

- Firstfruits; Prov.3:9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your increase; Exodus 23:16 Celebrate the Feast of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in the field. Also II Chron.31:5 (firstfruit = tithe).
- By giving God the firstfruits, we acknowledge that God should have first place in our lives, because without Him, we would have nothing. When David and the people of Israel were

bringing offerings for the building of the temple, here's what he said: I Chron.29:14...Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand.

- Gifts to the poor; Acts 10:4 Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God.
- Missions; Philippians 4:18...I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.
- God value's financial gifts based on what one has, not on what they do not have. See II Cor.8:12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have. See Luke 21:1-4.

SACRIFICIAL GIFTS

- See I Cor.3:10-15
- An African boy listened carefully as his teacher explained why Christians were such giving people. The teacher said, Jesus taught us that giving gifts is an expression of our love and friendship for Him and each other. Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). A couple of days later the boy brought the teacher a seashell of lustrous beauty. "Where did you ever find such a beautiful shell?" the teacher asked. The youth told her that there was only one spot where such extraordinary shells could be found. When he named the place, a certain bay several miles away, the teacher was speechless. She knew that it would have taken the young man hours to walk to the bay. Also, he would have faced many dangers from the jungle and rocky cliffs of the seacoast along the way. "Why, it's gorgeous and wonderful, but you shouldn't have gone all that way to get the gift for me," the teacher joyfully exclaimed. His eyes brightening, the boy answered, "Long walk part of gift."
- David said "I will not offer to the Lord that which costs me nothing."

PRAISE

- The sacrifice of lips that confess His name (Heb.13:15-16)
- The sacrifice of praise Acts 5:41; 16:25; Job 1:20-21.

OBEDIENCE/SUBMISSION

- See I Samuel 15:21-22

OUR BODIES

- Heb.10:5-7; Rom.12:1-2; I Cor.6:13b, 19-20
- Rom.6:13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life.

CONCLUSION

- I remember it like it was yesterday. I was 19 years old, had just received Jesus Christ as my Lord & Savior, and I went forward during a Sunday evening service at the Baptist church I was attending and surrendered my life to "full time Christian service." I told the Lord that night that I would go anywhere and do anything He wanted me to. That ultimately led me here. When I first got here, I worked at the Tampa airport and served at Calvary Chapel. My intention was to begin a Jr. High school ministry. It never happened. Right after I got here a friend I had done

ministry with in college called me and told me God was calling him to be a missionary in Africa. He asked me to join him. I was completely willing to go, but felt the Lord had called me to Florida, to this little church called Calvary Chapel. And this is where I've been ever since.

- This Christmas season, would you like to offer a gift to the Lord? Why don't you start with your body. If He has our bodies, then other gifts will naturally go with the package: Giving by faith, my best, financial gifts, sacrificial gifts, praise, obedience/submission.