

ChristMYTH BUSTERS: The Gift

MYTH: It's the _____ that _____.

2 reasons why we say it:

1. The _____ isn't _____ enough.

2. The _____ isn't _____ enough.

1 reason it can't be true:

1. We still _____ and _____ gifts.

TRUTH: The _____ matters, but it's the _____ that _____.

APP: _____ the _____.

- Today, we bring our ChristMYTH BUSTERS series to an end, and there's no better way to close it than by talking about gifts, and specifically, the one gift that matters.
- So, today, we're only going to bust one myth, because it may very well be the most dangerous myth of all, and if we believe it to be truth, we'll find ourselves missing the value of God's gift to us in His Son.
- So, let's tackle the myth about gifts and then we'll apply the truth.

MYTH: It's the thought that counts.

- This one phrase has been and will be spoken numerous times today as gifts are opened all over the world.
- Let me say this right up front: the fact that we're saying it's a myth doesn't mean people aren't sincere when they say it. As we'll see, there is certainly some truth in that simple statement, and it should mean something to us when others give time and thought to the giving of gifts.
- But I can think of 2 reasons why we say and hear this phrase, and I can think of 1 thing we always do that reveals the myth for what it is.
- Those are what I want us to unpack this morning.
- First, the 2 reasons we say it's the thought that counts...

1. We say it's the thought that counts when the giver isn't relevant enough.

- What do we mean by relevant? Involved enough with us to know us.
- They mean well, but they aren't involved enough in our lives to really know what to get us
- This can easily lead to bad gifts (Christmas Story clip)
- Sometimes a bad gift comes from a giver who just is too far removed from us - either by age, distance, life situation - to hit a home run with the gift
- This can lead to the "last-minute gift grab" syndrome
- "I know I need to give something, and I don't know what, so here's some Pajama Jeans!!"
- But this out of touch, last minute scramble is NOT true of God
- His gift was planned, purchased, and given on purpose and on time (1 Peter 1:18-20; Rom. 5:6)
- Inherent in how he gives is His involvement in the giving. Here are a few ways He gives:
 - a. Lovingly (John 3:16)
 - b. Willingly (Romans 8:32)
 - c. Freely (Matthew 10:8)
 - d. Continuously (Matthew 6:11)
 - e. Sacrificially (Mark 10:45)
- Bottom line? As a giver, God is more relevant to you and me than anyone else giving gifts.

2. We say it's the thought that counts when the gift isn't good enough.

- Sometimes, even when the giver is in touch with us, the gift just doesn't go like we planned
- In our family growing up, my brother Stephen had a word for really good gifts- "uniqueys"- and everyone wanted to be the person who gave him the gift he'd remember more than any of the others
- Unfortunately, it didn't always work out that way

- Let's face it, not every gift is going to end up on the Top Gifts of All Time list
- I don't know what tops your list of worst gifts ever, but mine is "The Gift of Urine"
- Our intentions were good - we were relevant as givers - but the gift failed
- Is it possible that this could be true of God? What kind of gifts does He give?
- Here's a pretty good list:
 - a. Life - John 10:10, 28
 - b. Peace - Numbers 6:26; John 14:27
 - c. Blessings - Numbers 6:26
 - d. Perseverance - Numbers 6:26
 - e. Attention - Number 6:26
 - f. A new heart - Ezekiel 36:26
 - g. Authority - Matthew 16:19
 - h. Daily provision - Matthew 6:11, 33
 - i. Holy Spirit - Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32
 - j. A new way of life - John 13:34
 - k. A home - Deuteronomy 26:9
 - l. The earth - Psalm 115:16
 - m. Kingdom knowledge - Luke 8:10
 - n. His body - Luke 22:19
 - o. A ministry - 2 Corinthians 5:18
 - p. Grace - Proverbs 3:34; Ephesians 1:6
 - q. A song in the night - Job 35:10
 - r. Understanding - Psalm 119:130
 - s. Forgiveness and repentance - Acts 5:31
- Now, that's a lot of gifts! Thankfully, God likes to simplify!
- So He takes all these gifts and puts them in one: His Son (Ephesians 1:3)
- James 1:17 describes the Giver (unchanging) and the Gift (good and perfect) and makes it clear that they are both relevant and good, and so the question becomes, "If the Giver knows us and the gift He gives is good, than what do we do with it?"
- That leads to the 1 thing we always do that reveals why the myth can't be true...

3. We still give and receive gifts.

- Think about it: if it was just the thought that counts, a lot less money would be spent.
- We'd all just gather around the tree and tell each other what we thought about giving.
- Or, even if we bought the presents, we'd never open them.
- We'd just look at them, admire them, and be thankful for the thought that was behind it.
- But we don't do that. We still give gifts. We still receive gifts. And we still open gifts.
- So, what is the truth?
- TRUTH: The thought matters, but it's the action that counts.
- One simple verse: John 3:16
 - a. God didn't just think about how much He loved us
 - b. God loved enough that He gave
 - c. He thought, and then He acted
 - d. And now, it's time that we do more than think, too

- Psalm 34:8 - taste and see that the Lord is good and then make Him your refuge
- 1 Peter 2:1-3 - once you taste Him, you'll crave Him, you'll grow in Him, and you'll become more like Him
- It all starts with a simple application of today's truth:
- APP: Open the gift
- Do more than just think about the Gift of Jesus, because if that's all you do, you're no closer to salvation than the demons who think about Him, too
- Take action, because ultimately, it is the action that counts.
- Open the Gift. Bow your knee. Come, and adore Him, Christ, Christ the Lord.