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THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

GIFTS AND GIVING

This is the time of the year for buying gifts. A great many are purchasing their gifts online this year because of the pandemic. Whether searching through the aisles of a store or surfing the web, finding the perfect gift for those you love is not always an easy task. However, when you have found the perfect gift and have the opportunity to give it to the one for whom it is intended, the appreciation evidenced by the recipient makes all the searching worth the effort.

Receiving a gift from someone can be special. But giving a gift has its own incredible rewards. The apostle Paul quoted Jesus as saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Jesus would know about the blessing of giving for He was God's gift to the world. "For God so loved the world that He **gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Paul, to the church in Galatia wrote, "Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, **who gave Himself for our sins**, that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:3-4). Titus 2:13-14 reads, "looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works."

Salvation through Jesus Christ is God's gift which He has made available to all who will receive it. The Bible tells us, "For by grace you have **been saved** through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift of God**" (Ephesians 2:8). The truth is that gift giving is incomplete until one is both offered and then accepts the gift. How does one accept God's gift of salvation? The answer is found in the examples of those who received salvation whose record is found in the New Testament. To accept God's gift of salvation they heard the gospel (Acts 2:37), believed Jesus to be the Son of God (Acts 8:37), repented of their sins (Acts 2:38), verbally confessed faith in Christ (Acts 8:37) and were immersed in water into the death of Jesus to be washed from their sin in His precious blood (Acts 2:38; 8:38-39; 10:48; 22:16).

The forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus is the most incredible gift one may receive. God offers to free you from the bondage of sin and give you eternal salvation. Will you accept His gift?