

# DEEP SIX STUDY

December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## ***Wrapped – “Unnecessary and Inspired”***

**MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS** (You can view the full message online at [capecodchurch.com/Watch](http://capecodchurch.com/Watch))

**Opening:** Christmas and gift-giving are inextricably linked together. At what has become the center of the Christmas tradition and celebration, we give gifts to each other – which, sadly, brings great stress to the season for many of us. But it wasn't meant to be that way, because God's gift at Christmas is a *true gift* – without conditions or expectations. This year for Christmas we'll explore “The Four Stages of Gift-Giving” as we unwrap the Ultimate Gift of Christmas.

### **1. The Art of Giving Begins with Intent** (Luke 2:8-10)

- The Christmas story, as recorded by Luke, begins with *fear* – the shepherds' fear at their encounter with the glory of God – but it continues with a clarification; a clarification of intent. God's intent was to “bring great joy to all people.”
- The giving of a gift always begins (Stage One) with the *intent* of the giver – their inspiration for giving the gift. It's from this intent that we can know if it's really a gift – or perhaps a *swap*...
- It's easy to confuse a gift and a swap (we even call them “gift swaps”). But swaps can turn ugly, because they come with an expectation of *control* and fairness. And there are rules...
- Christmas is the celebration of God's gift to us: abundant life through and with Jesus. And it's a true gift, not a swap – there is no expectation of fairness or reciprocity. It's an absolutely one-sided gift offered to us because of the Giver's intent and inspiration: he loves us!

### **2. The Clue is in the Wrapping** (Luke 2:10-14; Philippians 2:5-11)

- We know something is a Christmas gift by its wrapping – and the more beautifully it's wrapped, the more value it seems to hold (at least until we open it...). But the Christmas story tells us that when God came to earth as a gift, he didn't come “wrapped” as a conquering emperor or majestic king, he came wrapped in human flesh – the flesh of a helpless baby!
- Jesus – God's Ultimate Gift to us – came wrapped in baby human flesh because God wanted us to know that the gift of Christmas was “God with us.” He wanted us to understand that the God of the universe was willing to humble himself and come down to our human level – even to “give up his divine privileges” – to have a loving relationship with us.
- Jesus didn't come to ruin or threaten us – he came to give us life, and “life to the full.” He came in the most vulnerable, unthreatening wrapping possible to show us he can be trusted.
- Christmas is a time to read the story of Jesus with fresh eyes – to understand the beauty of the Gift God has given us. It's a good time to “read about Jesus – and fall in love with him.”

## ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

*These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message.*

Matthew 1:18-25; Matthew 7:9-11; John 3:16; 2 Corinthians 9:13-15; Ephesians 2:8-10; James 1:16-18

Video of the Week: [Grace](#) by the Bible Project

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Does Christmas gift-giving bring you stress? If so, what is it about the gift-giving tradition that's so stressful to you?
2. Why is the *intent* (or inspiration) of the gift-giver so important to how we view and enjoy the gifts we receive?
3. What do you think author Kelly Kapic meant when she said, "A gift, by definition, is unnecessary"? Do you agree?
4. In general, what do you think the wrapping of a Christmas gift tells us about the *intent* of the giver (if anything...)?
5. Read Philippians 2:5-11 again. Why is the fact that Jesus humbled himself so completely (even "wrapped" as a helpless human baby) so important to understanding the Christmas story?
6. What's something we could do – or an attitude we could take – that might make this year's Christmas gift-giving season less stressful and more joyful?