**“Gifts for the Savior”**

**by Merrilee A. Boyack**

**Christmas Sacrament Meeting**

Opening Hymn – “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” (#209)

Sacrament Hymn – God Loves Us So He Sent His Son, (#187)

MUSIC: Primary class: “Away in the Manger” (#42)

**Reading:**

At Christmastime, we contemplate the greatest gift of all—the subject of the entire celebration—the life of our Savior, the Christ Child.

Christmas is also a time to ponder the gifts given to us by our Heavenly Family as well.

Heavenly Father gave us the gift of life, the gift of the Creation, and then the gift that made it possible for us to become like Him and return to Him: His Son, Jesus Christ.

The apostle John described it beautifully:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. (John 3:16–17)

Christ then gave us the gift of His life. He told His disciples,

This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:12–13)

At Christmastime, we think about Jesus and the gifts that He brought to us, and we have a great desire to give something back to Him. But what can we give? What could we give to Him, the creator of the universe?

I have pondered this thought with great longing to find an answer. As I ponder, though, I am filled with His love. I want to serve Him and do His will. Beyond that, I want to somehow give something to Him that has meaning for Him. Just as I search carefully for the right gift for someone I love, I search for the right gift for Him as well.

**Music:** Solo – “If I Had Been in Bethlehem” (defordmusic.com)

**Reading:**

The Gift of Gratitude

Mary, the mother of Jesus, had a great destiny—one she faced with dignity and grace. Think about all that she faced. She was young, was with child before she was married, and, because of that, probably faced a tremendous amount of gossip, judgment, and social rejection. Did her parents believe her? We do not know. Telling Joseph must have wrenched her heart, and the scriptures record that he was thinking about “put[ting] her away privily” (Matthew 1:19) until God intervened.

Her destiny was unlike that of any other woman in the history of mankind: she was to be the mother of the Son of God. She was to be the one who fed Him, clothed Him, taught Him, and cared for Him. It was her responsibility to be His mother. No doubt such a responsibility weighed heavy on her soul. And yet through it all, Mary was grateful:

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my [Saviour](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/nt/luke/1?lang=eng).

For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. (Luke 1:46–49)

In facing all the difficulty and adversity that she knew awaited her, Mary focused on God and on her gratitude toward Him.

We can give Jesus the gift of gratitude. We can be grateful for all he has given us and all he will give us. We can be thankful for our Savior and for His atonement for us.

**MUSIC**: “Mary’s Lullaby” (all verses) – Young Women

**Reading:**

The Gift of Obedience:

The Christmas story is filled with wonderful examples of obedience as well. Mary, when told by an angel that she was to become the mother of the Son of God, responded, “Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38).

Joseph also reacted with obedience:

But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. . . .

Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS. (Matthew 1:20–21, 24–25)

It’s no wonder that Mary and Joseph were chosen to be Christ’s earthly parents. They were faithfully obedient.

Others in the Christmas story were obedient as well. The shepherds were obedient to the vision they had received: “And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger” (Luke 2:16).

The Wise Men also obeyed the direction they received after they had visited the young Jesus: “And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way” (Matthew 2:12).

Our obedience is a gift we can give Jesus. We can commit today—in this very moment, even—to be obedient with exactness. Choose to bend your will to the Savior’s in complete obedience. That is a gift He will treasure.

**MUSIC**: Ward Choir – “Joy to the World” (#201 or defordmusic.com) or “Born Is the Light of the World (defordmusic.com)

**Reading:**

The Gift of Remembrance

Our Father in Heaven has asked us to always remember His Son. Indeed, once we commit to baptism, we are invited every week to renew our covenant that we will always remember Him. We turn our hearts to Christ and tell our Heavenly Father “that [we] are willing to take upon [us] the name of thy Son, and *always* remember him” (Doctrine and Covenants 20:77; emphasis added). We covenant with God. We affirm to Him week after week that we will *always* remember His Son and never, ever forget Him.

Nephi writes his vision of the birth of the Savior

1 Nephi 11:

 13 And it came to pass that I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, and also other cities. And I beheld the city of Nazareth; and in the city of a[Nazareth](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) I beheld a b[virgin](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng), and she was exceedingly fair and white.

 14 And it came to pass that I saw the a[heavens](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) open; and an angel came down and stood before me; and he said unto me: Nephi, what beholdest thou?

 15 And I said unto him: A virgin, most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.

 18 And he said unto me: Behold, the a[virgin](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) whom thou seest is the b[mother](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.

 19 And it came to pass that I beheld that she was carried away in the Spirit; and after she had been carried away in the a[Spirit](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) for the space of a time the angel spake unto me, saying: Look!

 20 And I looked and beheld the virgin again, bearing a a[child](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) in her arms.

 21 And the angel said unto me: Behold the a[Lamb](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) of God, yea, even the b[Son](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng) of the Eternal c[Father](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/1-ne/11?lang=eng)!

At Christmastime, choose to remember Him in a real and meaningful way. Give Him the gift of holding Him close in our heart and mind. As we contemplate the birth of our Savior, may we always remember the life of our Savior. May we *always* remember Him.

MUSIC: Ward sing: “Silent Night” (#204) (choir could sing descant)

Solo: “A Manger Filled with Love” (defordmusic.com)

**Reading:**

The Gift of Faithfulness:

Two people in the Christmas story deserve special attention: Simeon and Anna. Though they appear only briefly in Jesus’ life story, these faithful souls were given the special privilege of being witnesses of Christ’s divinity.

Joseph and Mary took Jesus to be circumcised and dedicated to the Lord at the temple and to offer sacrifice to fulfill the requirements of the law of Moses. It was there that they met Simeon:

And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.

And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:

For mine eyes have seen thy [salvation](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/nt/luke/2?lang=eng),

Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

A [light](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/nt/luke/2?lang=eng) [to](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/nt/luke/2?lang=eng) lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. (Luke 2:25–33)

Simeon was a faithful man. When the Spirit prompted him to go to the temple, he went and was blessed to be a witness of the Christ child.

Then Joseph and Mary met Anna. Anna was a very old woman who was called a “prophetess” (Luke 2:36). She was a deeply devout and faithful woman whose life consisted of full-time service to the Lord; she was filled with the Holy Ghost and the spirit of revelation.

And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with [fastings](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/nt/luke/2?lang=eng) and prayers night and day.

And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for [redemption](http://www.lds.org/scriptures/nt/luke/2?lang=eng) in Jerusalem. (Luke 2:37–38)

A faithful man. A faithful woman. And God rewarded their lifetime of commitment by allowing them to be two witnesses of the Messiah.

Faithfulness is deeply personal. It’s that steady, day in, day out commitment to serve God and be true to Him. There’s nothing flashy about faithfulness. Instead, it is an internal compass that leads us on a fixed course toward our Savior.

We can choose to cleave to the Lord. We can choose every hour of every day to be one of the faithful. We can give this gift to our Savior.

MUSIC: Violins? Piano? - “Oh Come All Ye Faithful” #202 (or an arrangement?)

MUSIC: Choir w/ solos “When Hope Was Born” (defordmusic.com)

**Reading:**

The Gift of Charity:

Giving and receiving love is a beautiful part of Christmas. It is in honor of our Savior, the light and love of the world, that we serve.

He tells us, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, this is my [gospel](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3_ne/27/21a); and ye know the things that ye must [do](http://scriptures.lds.org/en/3_ne/27/21b) in my church; for the works which ye have seen me do that shall ye also do; for that which ye have seen me do even that shall ye do” (3 Nephi 27:21).

We can see as He sees. It is often at Christmastime when we open up our eyes to see the needs around us, but what if we committed to *see* all year long? Imagine looking at every man, woman, teenager, senior, and baby with eyes of love. If we see as He sees, we can see the great worth of a soul. We can see someone for whom He was filled with love and compassion and for whom He was willing to suffer.

We can give that gift to Him. We can choose to see, choose to feel, and choose to reach out in love and kindness to those around us. We can do the works that He does. We can give the gift of charity to our Savior.

MUSIC: Ward sing: “Love One Another” #308

**Reading:**

As we celebrate Christmas and move forward to a new year, may be remember our Savior and remember our gifts for Him.

May we give him the gift of gratitude for all that He has given us.

May we give him the gift of obedience, so that His Atonement will have meaning in our lives.

May we give him the gift of remembrance, that our covenant to remember him always will be meaningful and sincere.

May we give him the gift of faithfulness, dedicated service to His will and the will of the Father.

May we give him the gift of charity, that his works become our works and that we may be come like Him.

At this Christmas, may we give gifts to our Savior as He has given the greatest of all gifts to us.

Closing Hymn: “Because I Have Been Given Much, I Too Must Give” (Hymn 219)