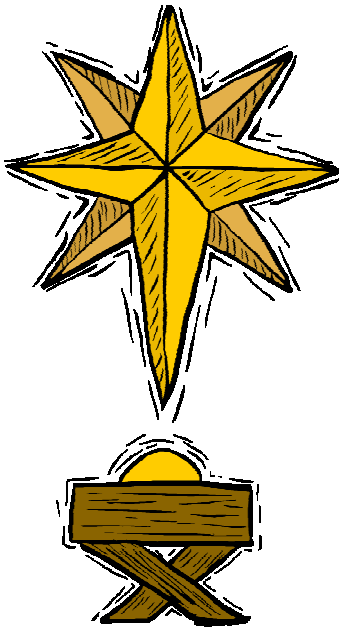


## **“WONDERFUL GIFTS OF GOD”**

By Mary Mayko



Psalm 111:1-4 KJV “Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. The works of the Lord are great, sought out by all them that have pleasure therein. His work is honorable and glorious: and his righteousness endures forever. He has made His works to be remembered: the Lord is gracious and full of compassion.”

Vss. 7-10 “The works of His hands are verity [truth] and judgment; all His commandments are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and righteousness. He sent redemption unto His people: He has commanded His Covenant forever: holy and reverend is His Name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do His Commandments: His praise endures forever.”

Wonderful gifts of God! Beautiful feet! Good News! Great joy! What gracious and marvelous words are given to us to tell us of God’s great love for His people! How our hearts are warmed as we ponder these awesome them and seek a deeper understanding of their meanings in our personal lives!

The seasons between Thanksgiving and Christmas often stir the hearts of many people who lay no claim to being Believers in the One True God! They will enjoy happy holidays with families and friends without it ever crossing their minds that many of their blessings are a gift from God!

[Matt.5:45b LB “For He gives His sunlight to both the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust too!”]

They give generous gifts to families and charitable organizations without a second thought! But! Do they even know of the wonderful gifts of God? Some are even offended that we would want to include our message of “Good Tidings” during *their* holiday season!

Have you ever thought of your feet as being a beautiful gift of God as you carry Good News to others?

Isa. 52:7 KJV “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that brings good tidings of good, that publishes salvation; that says in Zion, Thy God reigns!”

Do we share the joy of salvation in some way as we send our gifts and cards to others?

**Luke 2:10-11, 14 KJV “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the LORD.”**

**“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.”**

**What a privilege to become a child of the Most High God! How wonderful is the gift of salvation He has provided for all who will accept Him! Those with a humble heart realize they need Divine help!**

**Psalm 149:4 “For the Lord takes pleasure in His people. He will beautify the meek [humble] with salvation.”**

**It is certainly no disgrace to have a humble heart! They are the ones the Lord is pleased with! Those who recognize their need of a Savior are truly wise! The truth of God will always prevail, even when people fail to see it! Those with a heart full of pride see no need for God to be active in their lives!**

**When we really consider the wonderful gifts of God, our hearts will overflow with thankfulness. When we meet and greet others during the holiday seasons, they should be able to see a beauty in us that can only be explained as a Divine Presence! When we take pleasure in His gifts, it pleases the Lord greatly!**

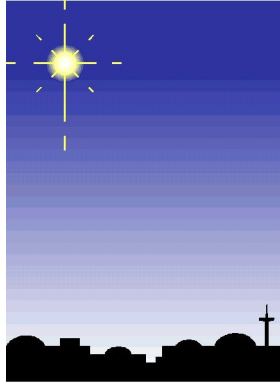
**Just what are some of the wonderful gifts we should be so grateful for? One is the Promise of a Savior that will deliver us from our sins! The glorious message the angel gave that night to the shepherds was a fulfillment of His wonderful Gift of Salvation!**

**Psalm 111:7 clearly tells us that His wonderful gift includes His Truth and Judgment. That is Good News! In today’s society there are so many misrepresentations and deceptions that people are not even sure of what they should believe about God! Some of the judges make rulings that appall us in their lack of wisdom! Criminals are often “slapped” on the wrist and released to do their evil deeds all over again! How sad that we have lost our sense of moral and social justice! How we need people today with “beautiful feet” to bring us truly “Good News!” Are you one of them?**

**The wonderful gifts of God are to be remembered! When we celebrate certain days, we should always keep in mind the reasons we are doing so! When we recall wonderful things the Lord has done for us personally, it will help us praise Him in our assemblies or congregations or gatherings just as it tells us to do in verse 1 of Psalm 111. We will praise the Lord with our whole heart! That sounds like an outburst of joy because of the One who has saved us and kept us faithfully in His arms! What a Gift!**

**Psalm 34:3 “Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt His name together!”**

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### **“A SPECIAL GIFT”**

By Mary Mayko

Published in “**Faith Messenger**” 1983

**Eph.2:8 “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”**

Christmas is an exciting time of year with so much to do to make ready for the “Great Day!” Shopping lists, special gifts for special people, of how much time, thought and money will be involved in each gift! Gifts for Mom and Dad, Grampop and GramMom, Uncle Bill and Aunt Sue! Our coworkers, friends, the mailman and paper boy and on and on and on! **Seems the lists never end!** So much goes into the preparation of Christmas giving, shopping, sewing, cooking or baking! What a lot of time, work, love and sometimes frustration and stress to make sure every thing is right! Many people start in January preparing or buying special gifts to be given the next Christmas, others wait to shop or prepare until the last minute!

Now what if, after all that has been done for the joy and benefit of others, **they did not accept the gift!** What a heartbreak that would be! To think of all the planning, preparation, time, talent and cost of materials, perhaps the very best you could afford to give and it was refused! How devastating! On the other hand, maybe it was accepted and then put on a shelf unopened! It belonged to them now, but was utterly useless while it still sat gift wrapped on that shelf! They would never know how much love your gift had in it! **Never really know how much you cared for them!**

They would never know how much love, the time involved, or the price of the gift that had been prepared just for them. On the other hand, perhaps they opened the gift but it was regarded as unimportant to them. They were complacent or careless with it and had a “so what” attitude toward it. It became neglected, trampled on, unloved and uncared for! How these actions and attitudes would hurt you!

**Yet, the greatest Gift ever known to man has been carefully planned for and the preparation was quite extensive and finally completed.** This precious and expensive Gift has been offered to all people everywhere, not just a Chosen few! This wonderful **Gift is Jesus Christ.** The Father planned and prepared and sent His Precious Son into the

world to die for the sinner, and that is you and me! The Gift is all ready for each of us. All we have to do is accept God's Precious Gift. Think of how it must break the Father's heart each time the offer of His Gift, His Son Jesus, is rejected! Some refuse while others accept but never open the "package". They never read the Bible to learn of the privileges they could have! Others open the package (Bible) but are careless or complacent about it. They do not follow the instructions contained in it.

We really need to consider what we put into giving others, and the way we are affected by their acceptance or rejection of our gift! How happy we feel when we see the joy on their faces when they appreciate our gift! What joy the Father must have when we accept with pleasure the Precious Gift of His Son. **While we are celebrating His Birthday, consider this! Have you accepted His Gift?**

## **“BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!”**

**By Rev. J Kehl Golding**



Luke 2:10 “Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.”

**“Comfort Corner” is bringing you great comfort and joy this month if you will just take the message to your heart!**

YES! COMFORT & JOY this season~ Christmas 2008! Economic upheaval! Fearful political changes! Unemployment rising! Domestic goods and services skyrocketing! Fear looming high on the horizon by great and small, rich and poor, individuals and corporations ~~ ALL wondering!!

My message this month begins with a story. After years of ministry, wandering near and far, we settled in a remote area in the State of Maine. We were semi-retired, ministering locally, but in our own home. Busy collecting animals which we dearly loved. The barn and pasture over run with chickens, ducks, turkeys, a pig, and a calf, and so on!

One afternoon while in the vegetable garden, our neighbor from a couple of miles down the road went by with his family in their horse and buggy. He stopped to ask if we wanted to buy a couple of sheep, they were “dirt cheap” because they were “worthless”! But since he was moving, he hated to just “leave them”. “They don’t take any care. I just leave them in the woods to wander and eat whatever they can find.”

After a few minutes of talk and thinking, he was told to bring them by after 4 pm as that would give us time to get to town and buy some grain for them. “Grain! You aren’t going to waste money buying those worthless critters grain!” “After 4 pm or no deal!” was the answer!

**What a sorry sight!!** Dusty, covered with Canadian thistles [a prickly plant with huge thorns] wild and very scared! Supper time found them as far down in the pasture as they could go. They watched as the pig dove for his grain, the fowls all went to their area for grain, and the calf merrily followed us about! Finally it was their turn. Into the trough went their grain, they never moved and we walked quietly away. But that molasses odor went straight up into the air, and by the time we were outside the fence, they had ventured to the through. Needless to say, they couldn’t resist it!

This went on for several days, but the next two weeks found them sheared, and with all the dirty matted and thorny hair gone, they were quite white. They soon learned we were the “bearers” of goodies!! One had a broken ear and it flopped, we called her Lucy. She became very tame, loving and dear to our hearts. The other one, Betty, never really trusted anyone, and was so stubborn! She would have made a better mule!!

I learned so many lessons from Lucy. **She fully trusted us and would follow my lead almost without question.** She was always the closest to her shepherd, for she knew he was the bearer “of good stuff” for her! We enjoyed them so much, we bought two lambs and named them “Jack & Jill”! The following Spring, the “worthless” Lucy presented us with twins! She did so every year for years to come, and one year, triplets!! Betty never had twins, but each year a beautiful sturdy lamb. But she always chose to be distrustful and distant and was never enjoyed like Lucy was, and several others in our flock.

### **WHAT WAS THE DIFFERENCE IN THEIR LIFE? THE SHEPHERD!!!**

Then, this was their response to the shepherd. Betty was a BELIEVER. She knew we were her shepherd, that her food would be there, and protection was hers. But, when called or spoken to, **she came at her convenience and when she wanted too!** Lucy was a true disciple, always following us, even if it meant a new area and she was reluctant, as we walked ahead she followed, always close as she could get! She “nosed” in our hand or pocket to see what we had for her. She had the joy of intimacy! I could call her night or day, fair weather or stormy, she would come running without question and in time, brought others with her!!

Why have I told you this true personal story? We are in troubling times, which continue to get worse. Don't kid yourself! This is NOT going to get turned around overnight! The future holds many decisions, changes, and dangers. All are going to be difficult to handle! **There is only one SAFE PLACE, in CHRIST! If** you have Him as your personal Savior, He is your Shepherd. He said; “I am the Good Shepherd; the Good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.” I am the Good Shepherd and know [gk: appreciate] my sheep, and am known of mine.” **John 10:11, 14.** Is it any wonder John the Baptist cried, “**Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world**”. **John 1:29**

In closing I remind you that David had all this in mind when he wrote the **23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm.** He was a shepherd and understood his responsibility to his sheep and the importance of knowing and understanding each one! In turn, he realized as one of God's sheep, he was cared for by the greatest of all Shepherds, and could almost brag: “The LORD is MY SHEPHERD- I shall not want” He takes care of me, no matter what the circumstances!

**It was not an accident that the joyful news of Christ's birth was announced to the shepherds!** Read afresh the beautiful safety and love found in the Good Shepherd!

**Psalm 23:1-6** “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His names' sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me. Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

Enjoy the great joy found in your Savior and Shepherd this Christmas Season as you walk with Him!

Rev. J Kehl Golding