Dear Open Door Family,

Well, Black Friday and Cyber Monday have both come and gone. These are days when in our culture we can take advantage of *special* deals and sales. I must admit the crowds on black Friday never encourage my participation - but sometimes in the interest of good stewardship and stretching every penny I will go and buy something that we actually need on that day. My shopping list is never very long, normally limited to one or two items. Now when I was a young child I remember that the list of stuff that I wanted for Christmas was a pretty long list. It seldom included things like sweaters or clothes. Yet when Christmas came I always got clothing (which I needed) and seldom got those things which my sinful and selfish little heart wanted. So, I would come away from Christmas with a sense of disappointment. Looking back on it now I wish that I had been able to verbalize some of that disappointment so that someone could have encouraged me to understand that I was missing the whole point of Christmas. Christmas is a reminder of what we have already received - God's amazing Grace and Favor. We deserved judgment, wrath, and hell and God chose to offer forgiveness through the sacrifice of His son instead. Jesus came to make a relationship with God possible. So, rather than being disappointed in Christmas I needed to learn that I was focusing on myself and the gifts that I was getting or wanted rather than being thankful for God's Amazing Gift of His Son. The best response to God's GIFT is what Paul challenged the Corinthians to do.

2 Corinthians 9:15 *(JBP) Thank God, then, for HIS INDESCRIBABLE generosity to you!*

Romans 8:32 *(NIV) He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all - how will he not also, along with him, GRACIOUSLY GIVE us all things?*

Every gift I have ever given or received is NOTHING compared to this amazing GIFT from God. To give us this astounding Gift of Forgiveness and Salvation - God CRUSHED His own Son. Jesus willingly went through the incarnation - death - and resurrection for us. What an Indescribable Gift.

Psalms 37:4 *(NIV) DELIGHT yourself IN THE LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.*

How should we respond to God's Gift? This verse holds that answer; however, this verse has been badly misused by Christians who use it as a formula for getting what they want from God. A little like a child trying to manipulate his parents into getting what they want for Christmas. But, if I am truly Delighting in the Lord Jesus, then I will realize that my heart is only full of joy when I truly see HIM as the answer to ALL of my DESIRES. I need to continue to learn that IF my delight is truly in knowing, loving, and honoring the Lord Jesus then I will get ALL I desire...which will be more of HIM.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, thank you for Your indescribable Love - Love that took you from your throne in heaven to a stable, and eventually to a cross for ME. Thank YOU! Please Lord, help me to Delight in You. Help me to see You as my Greatest Treasure.

Pastor Mark Kieft

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