

## WHAT GIFT?

When I was growing up, celebrations were especially difficult for me. This was especially true for the ones where you were expected to bring a gift. I attended celebrations, not knowing I needed to bring a gift. That was embarrassing. But the worst situation was when you showed up to honor someone, and you knew your gift was sub-par. I wasn't the richest kid on the block, but even my wrapping paper signaled that the gift wasn't all that great. Since gift wrap was expensive, we wrapped birthday presents in the newspaper's comics section. Nothing screams "LAME" like it being wrapped in newspaper. More than once, the person of honor chose my gift last to open (trust me, it wasn't "saving the best for last").

When I stand before my Savior and King, I often feel like that. What gift can I bring that is worthy of how awesome he is? How can I present it honorably, for I know it is wrapped in the folly of my imperfect life? The truth is, I'm not expected to bring a perfect gift. That would be impossible. If it was about the greatness of who I am and what I bring, I would lose focus on what Christ has given me (Romans 6:23). I am just told to completely yield my life in obedience before him as a sacrifice to honor him.

Romans 12:1

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

I can praise him by continuously acknowledging his name and blessing others.

Hebrews 13:15-16

*Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

I can put my faith in him. More than intellectual ascent, this is my trust, confidence, and loyalty.

Hebrews 11:6

*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.*

God has a way of taking imperfect things and using them for his glory. A sacrifice of a boy's tiny lunch was made into a feast for the hungry. Fishermen and tax collectors were selfless leaders. Yielding demoniacs were made witnesses of the Christ. Confessing book burners were extollers of the great name of Jesus (Acts 19). The list could go on.

So, what will you bring when you stand before the King today? Instead of critiquing the quality of your gift...

Psalms 34:3

*Oh, magnify the Lord with me,  
and let us exalt his name together!*

May the King be glorified today.

Shalom,  
Ryan