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GIFT AND GIVER

At some point along life's pathway one of your children presented you with a veritable priceless piece of their handiwork. It may have been a piece of jewelry, a keychain or any number of things crafted and handed to you, that in their mind's eye was indeed "priceless". Perhaps there was something etched or communicated on the article that expressed their love. While others may look at it with a somewhat skeptical eye, nevertheless, to you it is indeed "priceless".



Filled with the Holy Spirit, Zechariah sets forth praise to God for His giving to mankind the most precious gift of all, the long awaited Messiah (see Luke 1:67-79). The child born to Zechariah and Elizabeth was John, who would serve as the "voice crying in the wilderness" as seen in Isaiah 40:3-8, preparing the way for the Messiah. But focus on what Zechariah stated in Luke 1:78, it is priceless, "Because of the tender mercy of our God; with which the Sunrise from on high shall visit us."

The preciousness of a gift is not necessarily determined by the materials used to make the article; rather who is the crafter and presenter of the gift. All of which is made evident by simply asking a parent about a gift they received from one of their children. It matters not, even if it was a fistful of flowers plucked from the yard and included dandelions. There is a level of worth and value that is unparalleled: a gift given in love.

There is a classic example of this seen in the New Testament. When the news came to Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth would bear a child to him, even though they both were "advanced in age", he had a difficult time wrapping his mind around such. In verse eighteen of Luke chapter one, Zechariah inquired of the angel Gabriel, who had brought the news to him, "How shall I know this for certain? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years." Gabriel responded by saying, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I have been sent to speak to you; and to bring this good news; and behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place." (Luke 1:19-20) Zechariah had month after month to fully appreciate the gift given to both he and his wife. What is striking is what he brings forth following the birth of their son, John.

While Zechariah was elated with the gift of the son given to both he and Elizabeth, notice further what he had to say. "To shine upon those who sit in darkness, and the shadow of death" (Luke 1:79). A gift replete with such an abundance of love that it will extend out to those in darkness. A gift within a gift, as John announced and made the way for Jesus the very epitome of God's love, grace and mercy.

How does one even begin to encapsulate the magnitude of God's mercy? Perhaps Paul said it best, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Ephesians 2:4-5) Peter on his part wrote in his first epistle, chapter one, verse three, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

The greatest gift? Has been given to us by our Heavenly Father, it is one that is an extension of His over-flowing love, tender mercy and amazing grace. The gift presented to mankind, is His Son, Jesus, who is the Christ; and by His paying the price on the cross for our sins, we can find forgiveness thereof (see Romans 5:1-9, 6:1-7) Gift and Giver. (wbe)