



8.21.11/Ephesians 2:8-9

God's Gift

Materials Needed

A box/bag wrapped like a present (if unavailable, just print a picture of a gift!)

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast."

Activity/Discussion:

Show the "gift" to the children. What am I holding? Do any of you enjoy getting gifts? Of course you do! It is hard to imagine anyone saying they didn't enjoy receiving a present. If I were to give you this gift and ask for five dollars, would it be a gift? No! If you have to pay for it or do something to receive it, it's not a gift. When someone gives you a gift, it doesn't cost you anything. There are no conditions. . . all you have to do is accept it. That's what makes it a gift! In today's passage, we'll read about the greatest gift we could ever get-eternal life with God.

Questions:

1. What are some of the "works" that we wrongly believe might save us or let us be with God forever? *Answers will vary but include: Obeying my parents, going to church every Sunday (even when I don't feel like it!), being friendly to people, reading my Bible every night, praying a lot.* These are all good things to do, but will never be enough to rid the sin that lives in us.
2. Read John 3:16.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him would not perish but have eternal life."

Jesus is God's one and only Son and He came to live among us in human form to live a perfect life, to die on the cross to conquer the sin that separated us from God, and to come back to life to give us new life IN HIM! In this verse, who do we see is offered the gift of eternal life? *WHOEVER believes in Him.* Who does this include? *That means you and me, mom, dad, your siblings. . . and even the kid at school who is mean to you. We are all sinners and all fall short of God's perfection, but if we ask forgiveness for those things – if we believe that Jesus is Lord and can say with our mouths that God raised Him from the dead, we will be saved and get to spend eternity with Him.*

3. Why do you think real faith means "that no one can boast?" *When we accept God's grace, it is a FREE gift. If we remember our opening discussion, if you have to pay for a gift or do something to deserve it, it's not really a gift at all. By reminding us that our works will never be enough to save us, we are also reminded that we can never boast or brag about what we did to earn it. The glory rests solely in the work of Christ on the cross.*

Reflection/Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, for doing all the work on our behalf. We pray that we will remember that while we should do good things, and treat people well, no amount of good behavior or works will be enough to save us from our sin. Please help us from being boastful about the "good" things that we do, and to remember ourselves in light of the perfect life that You lived. We pray that all glory will belong to You. Amen.