

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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Call to Gladness

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Call to Gladness

Abstract

"Can we humble ourselves to receive this Messiah, not re-cast in the image of our own desires but as the Deliverer we really need?"

Posting about accepting Christ with gladness from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/a-call-to-gladness/>

Keywords

In All Things, lectionary, Christmas, gifts, Messiah

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

A Call to Gladness

 [inallthings.org/a-call-to-gladness/](http://allthings.org/a-call-to-gladness/)

December 25,
2016

Aaron Baart

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 97](#)

[Isaiah 62:6-12](#)

[Luke 2:\(1-7\)8-20](#)

[Titus 3:4-7](#)

Every year at Christmas, like most parents, I hope that my kids will like the presents I bought them. Usually, it's a pretty sure thing (kids love presents!), but every once in a while, I am a little saddened when they open a well-thought out gift, only to act immediately disappointed with what lies underneath the festive, crinkling paper. I've even heard them say before, "I didn't want this!" or "I was *totally* hoping for something else!" Now, I could bemoan their responses. I could chalk their words up to an ungrateful, entitled generation. I could even dismiss it simply as immaturity. But regardless, this situation still hurts my fatherly heart.

But, my mild annoyance must pale in comparison to the utter heartbreak our Father must have felt every day during his Son's life. The first Christmas gift, par excellence, wrapped in swaddling cloth and lying in a manger, was rarely accepted as the gift He was intended to be. Rejected by his recipients and downright disliked and disdained by those who should have recognized *the* gift of God, Christmas' first gift was only treated as such by those who had nothing to begin with.

Psalm 97 opens with a call to gladness due to the reign of God in the world, and an invitation for distant shores to rejoice because of our God. And yet, the Pharisees weren't the only ones who had a hard time receiving God on his own terms. Even his closest friends and followers struggled to recognize him as God, let alone get excited about the type of Kingdom he had come to bring. Rather, they wanted a Messiah in their own image—a gift on their own terms. And so do we. Time and again, our prayers look more like a selfish child's Christmas wish-list than a desire for self-abandon. Deny ourselves? Hardly. We're still the people who follow-up our annual day of Thanksgiving with a nation-wide obsessive, people-trampling pursuit of *more*.

So the real Christmas question is, can we receive the gift of God on its own terms? Can we humble ourselves to receive this Messiah, not re-cast in the image of our own desires but as the Deliverer we really need? For such is always the Christ-event—God saving us from ourselves.

To borrow just a little more from Psalm 97, this Christmas, let us desire that God save us through "His lightning that lights up the world . . . as the mountains [and our selfish ambitions] melt like wax before the Lord" for "Light shines on the righteous and joy on the upright in heart" (Psalm 97:4-5, 11).