

# Sermon Note: The Greatest Gift

## Third Sunday of Advent

### Introduction

As we continue our Advent series, *The Redemption of Scrooge*, we journey with the Ghost of Christmas Present to consider the theme of abundance. This week's scripture recounts the story of the shepherds, ordinary people who are the first to hear of Christ's birth. Their awe and joy in response to God's gift remind us that true abundance isn't measured by wealth but by recognizing God's presence among us.

Similarly, Ebenezer Scrooge is taken to witness the Cratchit family, whose joy and gratitude stand out despite their poverty. This week, we explore how recognizing God's greatest gift—the incarnation of Jesus—transforms our perspective on abundance and gratitude.

### Illustration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edCZPmSCBjo>

In this clip from *Mickey's Christmas Carol* (1983), Scrooge visits the Cratchit family with the Ghost of Christmas Present and witnesses their humble yet joyful Christmas celebration.

### Why This Video?

This scene beautifully highlights the Cratchit family's gratitude and love despite their meager circumstances. Tiny Tim's cheerfulness and faith stand out as a symbol of hope and joy, mirroring the shepherds' response to the angelic announcement in this week's scripture. This clip invites us to explore how recognizing God's greatest gift—the incarnation of Jesus—transforms our perspective on abundance and gratitude.

### Video Discussion Questions

1. What stands out to you about the Cratchit family's celebration, given their circumstances?
2. How does Tiny Tim's attitude challenge the way we think about abundance?
3. Why do you think the Ghost of Christmas Present chose to show Scrooge this scene?
4. What can we learn from the Cratchit family's gratitude and love in the midst of scarcity?
5. How does this scene help us examine what it means to receive God's gift with joy?

### Luke 2:8-20 (CEB)

<sup>8</sup>Nearby shepherds were living in the fields, guarding their sheep at night. <sup>9</sup>The Lord's angel stood before them, the Lord's glory shone around them, and they were terrified.

<sup>10</sup>The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Look! I bring good news to you—wonderful, joyous news for all people.

<sup>11</sup>Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors."

<sup>15</sup>When the angels returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go right now to Bethlehem and see what’s happened. Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.” <sup>16</sup>They went quickly and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup>When they saw this, they reported what they had been told about this child. <sup>18</sup>Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup>Mary committed these things to memory and considered them carefully. <sup>20</sup>The shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. Everything happened just as they had been told.

### **Scripture Discussion Questions**

1. What stands out to you about the shepherds’ response to the angelic announcement in Luke 2:8-20?
2. Why do you think God chose to announce Jesus’ birth to the shepherds instead of the wealthy or powerful?
3. How does this passage challenge the way we define abundance in our lives?
4. How might recognizing God’s greatest gift change the way we respond to challenges or scarcity?
5. What lessons from the shepherds and the Cratchit family can you take into your own celebrations this Christmas season?

### **Weekly Action**

Take time this week to identify one area of your life where gratitude feels hard to access—whether due to scarcity, challenges, or stress. Pause and pray, asking God to reveal where abundance is already present. Then, act on this awareness: extend generosity to someone else or share your joy in a tangible way.

### **Prayer**

I lift up my eyes.

What do I see?

The great divide...

bond and free.

Exploited and exploiting,

displaced and established,

the powerful and the powerless,

entangled and fragile!

Let my spirit be lifted, Lord,

let my soul behold your beauty,

the bounty of your resources,

the overflowing of your unfailing love.

Let me know they are mine too.

Lord, let me hope.

*Disclosure: This Sermon Note was created by LJUMC staff with the support of AI tools.*