

# Near...

Part 6: The Greatest Release

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December 26 & 27, 2009

## Review of the Series

The magi released a season

The shepherds released responsibility

Joseph released his reputation

Mary released her whole being

Jesus released his life

## What did God release?

*His son.*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. – *John 3:16*

## Why did He release His son?

*To save the world.*

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. – *John 3:17*

Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins. – *Hebrews 9:22*

## What does this mean for us?

*Whoever receives and believes can become a child of God.*

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. – *John 1:12-13*

## There's a right way to receive this gift:

1. With repentance

2. With gratitude

3. With belief

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to many... – 1 Cor.15:3*

4. In wholeness

5. In obedience

*Jesus replied "If anyone loves me he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." – John 14:23*

(Continues on back)

## God draws near when we choose to walk in obedience.

### What will God release next?

#### Challenge and Next steps

- If you haven't already, accept the gift that God released! You may want to pray this prayer, then tell someone about your decision:

*Dear Father in Heaven, I admit that I have sinned, and I understand that my sin has separated me from God. I believe that Jesus paid the price for my sins by dying on the cross, and I now ask for – and accept – his free gift of forgiveness and salvation. I welcome the Holy Spirit to come live in me, to transform my thoughts and actions, and empower me to live a life that pleases God. I accept God's gift of eternal life. Thank you, Father, for loving me enough to save me. Amen.*

- In 2010, make a commitment to answer this question: "What does it mean for me to *know* God, not just know *about* God?"
- Commit to reading the book of John in the month of January
- Pick up the reading plan *Two Years Through the Bible* at the Connection Point today (\$1.00)
- Participate in the Alpha Course or one of our recovery classes this winter

#### Small Group Discussion Questions



1. What is the greatest Christmas gift you remember receiving?
2. Do you think God and the Holy Spirit felt anything when Jesus was released from heaven and sent to earth? If so, what do you think they might have felt?
3. Describe one of the times in your life when you had to release, let go of, or surrender something to God. What was the result?
4. How have you, are you, or will you respond to God's greatest release to you?
5. How can we pray for you tonight?