

## Charlie Brown

A friend sent me a story written by Charlene M. Speer about Peanuts and how Charles Shultz developed his Christmas story, "A Charlie Brown Christmas." He wished to incorporate the story of the birth of Christ into the story, others objected but Charles Shultz prevailed. I loved Charlie Brown and read it faithfully. There was so much about faith in the stories that one had to read it faithfully. One of my favorite stories was every Fall when Lucy would hold the football and Charlie Brown would attempt a kick. Lucy would always pull it away at the last minute, causing Charlie Brown to fall on his back. I was always amazed at his trust. Each time Lucy would promise to hold the ball and each time she would fail. Charlie Brown would always believe her and trust her. Charlie Brown gave us an example of forgiveness and trust. Lucy gave us an example of trying and failing and being forgiven. Are we Charlie Brown or are we Lucy or maybe a little bit of both? In his story, "A Charlie Brown Christmas." Charles Shultz gives us another lesson. Linus is holding his blanket and while sharing the story of what Christmas is all about, Linus drops his blanket at the words "fear not." Linus is relying on his love of material things to make him safe instead of trusting God. He lets go of his fear and his reliance on his blanket for love and comfort. Later in the story, Charlie Brown has chosen the worse tree imaginable, it is sparse and plain. But then Linus takes his blanket, his beloved blanket, and wraps it around the tree. The tree is transformed into a beautiful tree standing tall and full. The love and comfort Linus has given and received from the blanket has changed the tree just as God's love can transform us and we can use that love to comfort and be an example to others. A New Year is coming, I want to trust more, forgive more, love more, try more, just as I am forgiven, loved, trusted, and believed in by our awesome God.

Colossians 3:12-14 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Lord, we thank you for the day, for the beauty of the snow, and for the sun that shines down on us. Be with us, be with our church and our church family. Give us strength, love, and patience for these days. Be with those who are lonely, those who are ill, those who grieve. Be with our families, grant them safety and good health. Bless our Pastor and his ministry, be with his family, keep them all safe and well. May we be the hands and feet of Christ as we seek to help those in need, those who hunger, those who seek your love, the children who are in need. Be with those adults and children who live with abuse and have nowhere to go to escape, grant them safety and may they know they are loved by you. In Jesus name, Amen

Grace Epperson