

The Best Gift

What was the best gift you ever received at Christmas? I have received more than one "Best Gift Ever!" I came upon one just today. It is a Reindeer mounted on a Detroit Tiger plaque with a Santa Hat on and a very mean scowl on its' face. Now why would I call this a best gift ever? Because this obviously comes from a person who knows me and accepts my love of baseball and Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer as sung by Gene Autry. With this gift they are not trying to change me but are accepting who I am. They, without probably knowing it, gave me a gift that reminded me of Sunday evenings when I was 5 years old and my love for Gene Autry on the radio. Fast forward many years and I am reminded of my love for the Detroit Tigers especially, 1968 and 1984 and falling asleep with Ernie Harwell in my ear. I was born in 1935, another winning year. I was so pleased to put that ornament on my down-sized tree, a tabletop tree this year. Much easier to set up and decorate given my advanced age. My other best gifts are the ones my children made in school. Now those are treasures. Then there are the ones we made together with glitter and glue as a family and the ones that commemorated anniversaries and births. Our Grandpa and Grandma ornaments. Our trees as we go through life tell a story of that life, our faith, our hobbies, our teams, our children and grandchildren, our church, our trips, our first Christmas. Even our favorite movies are depicted with a leg lamp from "A Christmas Story," an Angel or a bell from "It's a Wonderful Life," or something from "Home Alone." Best Gift Evers usually tell the story of love. Love that is expressed in our giving. This is how we show our love for each other. With gifts from the heart. It is also how God expressed his love for us. He gave us a best gift ever. It came as a baby, born in a manger, grew up to be the Messiah, died on a cross for our sin, then rose again and is with us even today. Nothing we can ever give can top this gift, but we are to share this gift. Share this good news with others. Tell them what this gift has meant in our lives. This gift saved me when I was lost, strengthened me when I faced life's trials, and is still with me, loving me, teaching me, and saving me today.

Luke 2:8-12 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angels said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord, this will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Lord, may we greet this Christmas as those Shepherds did so long ago, with wonder and awe at what we have been given. Be with those who hunger and those who are in need. May we answer your call to "feed your sheep." Be with our church, may those who enter our doors find you waiting. Be with Pastor Don, bless his ministry. Keep him safe and well. Be with his family. Be with those that find grief in their midst this week. Comfort them. Be with those that are ill, may they be well. Thank you Lord for all we have been given but especially for that little baby in a manger that was our Messiah. Amen

Merry Christmas,

Grace Epperson