

Christmas is Coming

It is here. That most wonderful time of the year. We think of gifts and spend way more than we said we would. I have a per person limit but sometimes I go a little crazy. I see something I think someone would especially love and have to have it. I once would then make it up to everyone so that the same amount was spent on everyone. That sometimes got way out of hand. So, I quit that but now figure everyone will get their year. Now my grandchildren and beautiful, adorable great grandchildren and children are scattered so that means going to the UPS office and mailing packages. Gift giving is a joy I love. Carrying packages and using a walker is not. I love Christmas, the "spirit" of Christmas is contagious with "Merry Christmas" on almost everyone's lips. It can be a joyous time but there are a few Scrooges that show up. I often think of the "Innkeeper" at Christmas. Here was a young couple. a man asking for a room to put his pregnant wife in and the pregnant wife standing there. He couldn't offer them anything except a stable? I guess he gave what he had. Most people don't do that much. My Mother was not perfect, but she never turned away a stranger or a friend. She welcomed anyone who needed a place to stay. From an escaped prisoner to people suddenly homeless she would take in anyone. One time she received head lice as a reward from one and for the other a visit from the Chief of Police. For a few years during WWII, we had a Canadian Soldier who spent his furloughs with us because he had shown up one day looking for relatives with the same name. We were not related but he was invited to stay and for three years spent his furloughs visiting with us. My Mother did not believe that strangers should ever be turned away unless they were Gypsies, she was frightened of Gypsies and told stories of hiding as a child because Gypsies were coming by. Her Mother had 11 children, and I can picture her screaming "Gypsies coming, run and hide and be very quiet."

But once again it is December, and we look forward to celebrating the birth of Jesus. The birth of one who would come to die for our forgiveness for our sins. A lesson in sacrifice, love and giving. A Savior who would die on a wooden cross. A sacrifice like no other. May we love that little babe and know that he was a gift beyond no other, a gift that would teach us about love and giving. Let us remember in this holy season of Christ's birth to thank God for the gift of life, for the gift of being able to give to others and for the gift of a home and shelter, for the food we eat and for the gift of love so freely given and especially for the gift of forgiveness when we fail to be the people God calls us to be.

Luke 2:6 While they were there the time came for the baby to be born and she gave birth to her first born, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

Lord, forgive us when we fail you. Forgive us when we let love of material things rule our lives, forgive us when we do not love our neighbors and strangers. Help us to be the people you called us to be. Be with us this season of giving, and may we remember that you gave us the greatest gift of all, the gift of a small babe that would grow up to be our savior, a gift we can never repay, a gift we carry in our hearts and souls. We praise you and ask for your forgiveness when we fail to be the people you have called us to be. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson