



Christmas Is More Than Gift Giving

What is Christmas? Christmas is an open door—a stable door opened wide in welcome—the door of an open heart. But many doors are made of stern fiber, rough hewn, and fired in the forge of life. Many doors are locked, and the latch is on the inside. Perhaps what lies behind the door is thought to be unfit to be opened to the Light. Perhaps there lies an ugliness thought to be too great to be forgiven. Yet, long ago a stable might have said, "No I am not fit that such a wondrous thing should happen here! Let Him find some other place—some far better place to be born!" "Welcome, little Lord Jesus! Stay with me and make me better with thy staying!" and opened wide its crude made door.

Sally Durham

What does Christmas really mean to us? Is it just a vacation from school with gay parties and exciting presents, or do we really celebrate it as Christ's birthday, in honor of His birth centuries ago in a humble Bethlehem stable? He came into the world as a human, bearing many temptations and sufferings that we might be saved from our sins and given a truer understanding of the will of God. For this we should be most grateful. How much happier we are than those who have not had Christ as their Savior! We owe it to Him to maintain a respect for His name by living a good peaceful life, serving as an example to unbelievers, who might come to desire this happy way of living under a loving God. By putting Santa Claus before Christ, though, we are not being the true disciples that we should be.

The true spirit of Christmas comes in showing "glory to God in the highest." To best glorify God we must rededicate ourselves to Him, praying forgiveness for our sins, and making an honest effort to improve. One way of praising Him is to serve our fellowman with a sincere, loving and generous feeling, not just a hypocritical way of showing off one's piety. What better season could there be for practicing "peace on earth, good will to men," giving that other less fortunate than we may be made happier? Through kind words and Christian deeds we can play our part in spreading real meaning of Christmas, and the warm glow that comes with singing "Joy to the world; the Lord has come" will be ours.

Phyllis Brooks

Prayer

Our Heavenly Father, help us to better understand that Christmas is the rebirth of Jesus Christ in our lives. Help those who may not be as fortunate as we are and bless the lives of everyone with Thy ever-loving Spirit. Help us as we strive to present Christ as the way, the truth, and the life to others who are in need of Him. We ask it in Christ's name and for His sake. Amen.

Pete Wyrick

What is "Christmas Spirit?" What's this infectious ecstasy which embraces homes, towns, and churches once every year, a simple felicity which can penetrate the cold, concrete canyons of a city and turns mens' minds, temporarily at least, from the cares of a petty world? In some respects it is tangible, but more often it cannot be described, cannot be touched.

A talking fire throwing bands of light on the gossamer branches of an evergreen, whispers breaking into pearls of excited laughter while the family wraps presents in the front bedroom; and floating above everything a tantalizing combination of colors—these are the signs of Christmas. But lying beyond this superficial glance is something more. Complicated? No, it's a feeling of "peace and good will toward men," brotherhood, and most of all it is a happiness derived from doing good.

We are all familiar with "Christmas Spirit". Its coming is inevitable, but so is its departure. As the once fragrant needles of the tree begin to wither and the mountains of wrapping paper eventually find their way into the trash can, spirit seems to falter and then disappear completely.

Why don't we make "Christmas Spirit" or "Christianity" as alive and wonderful in our daily life as we do in December?

Dick Robinson

Weeks before the arrival of Christmas day, we begin thinking of the gifts we will buy for our relatives and friends. We look in the windows of stores as we try to decide which gift will best suit each person on our list. Some of us save our pennies through out an entire year so that we may be prepared for the time of buying. We bring the gifts home proudly and spend much time wrapping them in gay paper and ribbons with perhaps a touch of holly or a cluster of bells tied on the package to make it even more festive in appearance.

Our thoughts are so busy with the pleasant task of choosing and wrapping these gifts of ours, that we may forget that gift which was given to us nearly two thousand years ago. We hear the Christmas carols and think of the babe of Bethlehem, but do we take the time to think deeply of the real meaning of His birth? Do we pause to be truly grateful to God for giving to the world His only Son, Jesus Christ? Do we realize that this greatest gift of all is the promise of salvation?

Reggie Bell

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