



December 20, 2009

Re-Gifting

Moment of Manna

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Merry Christmas Everyone. There! I said it. I'm not ashamed to say it. I'm not afraid to say it. I'm putting Christ back in Christmas. There seems to be a growing movement right now to get people to say "Merry Christmas." We want everyone to say it. We want the stores to say it. And we can make the stores say it. All we have to do is hit them in their pocketbooks. We simply say, "If you can't say Merry Christmas, then I can't spend my money in your store." You'll be surprised at how fast they'll turn it around. But you know, if every store in town began saying "Merry Christmas" tomorrow, that won't put Christ back in Christmas. We can't expect non-believers to understand what it means to put Christ back in Christmas, if we as Christians don't really understand it ourselves. Do WE put Christ in Christmas?

Why did Christ come to this earth to be born? Remember, we didn't choose to be born. It happened. Jesus CHOSE to be born. And we know what His purpose in being here was. Shouldn't Christmas be a celebration of what He did, and shouldn't we try to imitate that? For God so loved the world that He gave...you fill in the blank...He gave whatever anyone needed...salvation, health, peace, love, life, compassion...and not just to His family and friends, but to everyone who had a need. He stressed giving to those in need. What do we stress? What do we give? How much of our Christmas is a reflection of what Christ did? How much Christ are we putting in Christmas?

Many of you know that my favorite author is Dr. Seuss, and my favorite story is The Grinch. Remember, the Grinch was the villain, yet even he came to realize what it meant to put Christ in Christmas. Toward the end of the story we get to read the Grinch's mind. "Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, really means a lot more." I'm not saying it's wrong to give material things to our family and friends; but if that's all we stress, then we've taken Christ out of Christmas, and it takes more than a "Merry Christmas" to put Him back in.

On the day after Christmas we sit around and ask each other, "So, what did you get for Christmas?" That's the wrong question. We should be sitting in our closet with God and let Him ask us, "So, what did you give for Christmas?" When you think of your most

favorite present ever, was it your favorite because it cost so much, or because you appreciated how much time and effort and thought went into it? Christmas is about giving...but giving what?

God said, "I give you peace. My peace I give to you." I give a WII game console and a couple of games.

God said, "I give you life, and that more abundantly." I give a box of chocolates...the good ones...the expensive ones...Belgian chocolates.

God said, "I give you My Son to be the atonement for your sins, so you won't have to pay the price." I give an interesting, decorative little trinket that'll probably be re-gifted in a couple of weeks, and be re-gifted a few times more in the course of a year.

If this is the sum total of our Christmas, then Christ isn't in it. But it doesn't have to be that way. We can have it both ways. We can enjoy our family. We can enjoy our friends. We can enjoy the exchange of gifts, and still enjoy giving Christ His rightful place. We just need to remember that Christ is in Christmas when we give peace, when we give life, when we give love, when we give hope, when we give Jesus. And after all, those are the only gifts that were truly intended to be re-gifted.