

Christmas In July

So, a blessed Christmas to you! Yes, last week was the Fourth of July celebration. Yes, the weather forecast is not for snow, but in the 90's, and may feel like 100. It has been about seven months since Christmas day. It is another 5 months until Christmas comes again. So I say again, a blessed Christmas to you today, tomorrow and forever!

For Christians who walk with the Lord, Christmas is a year round event which affects and inspires us every day. And it is a worthy thing to think of the Christmas event, Jesus come to earth at Bethlehem. To sing with the angels, to worship with the shepherds, to ponder with Mary about what wonderful and marvelous things God has accomplished with Christmas. When we do this, we are singing God's praises and worshipping in the spirit and blessing of Christmas itself.

Christmas is not a thing to be worshipped. It is not just a feeling to be felt, although some would try to make it so. Christmas is the arrival of God in Christ on earth, and all of faith and life follows from that world-changing, one of a kind event.

Jesus himself says, "Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time." This knowledge, and the resulting faith which transforms heart, mind, and soul, means that Jesus walks with us here with us on earth, and will be with us forever.

The blessing of Christmas is to be sought after and celebrated all year round. "Christmas," writes Norman Vincent Peale, "waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful."

No sooner has Christmas passed than people go back to hating and hurting one another. The Christmas pause of World War I soldiers, when German and English soldiers put down their weapons to sing Christmas hymns for a day, was soon forgotten as guns and artillery began doing their work soon after.

We must discover Christmas as a permanent state of mind, and not confine it to December of each year. As the merchants try to recapture that time of year when

they receive most of their income in July, we must remember that Christmas is not about what we can buy or even presents for others. It is about love, respect, reconciliation, and faith.

“It's funny how we 'do' Christmas. Christmas is not something that we do, it is something that was done. It celebrates the long awaited arrival of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. We had nothing to do with it, but what we can do is praise God for the coming of the Lord, who washed away the sins of the world by dying on the cross.” ~Monica Johnson

So when we view Christmas as something God has done, not what we do, it takes on quite a different quality. God made Christmas happen over 2000 years ago. He can make it happen every single day for us, as people accept and celebrate what God in Christ is doing that very moment in time.

Perhaps a fresh start is what you are seeking in your life today. Jesus offers us a new start when we put our faith in him and trust him in everything. Kelly Clarkson knows this. “The thing about Christmas is that it almost doesn't matter what mood you're in or what kind of a year you've had - it's a fresh start.”

A special image of Christmas is the Christmas tree. How many have you erected? Are you still doing it, and why? Christmas proper, as in December 25, is remembered once a year. Pray a blessing on all you know, for they will not always be there.

“Before we took down the tree each year,” says actress Catherine Hicks, “Dad would always say a prayer that we would be together the next Christmas. I cling to that prayer, which serves as a reminder that it's important to be grateful in the present for the people you love because, well, you never know.”

Christmas is indeed about life and death. It is more than presents, more than beautiful packages wrapped up with bows. It is something more. To paraphrase Dr. Seuss, it does not come from a store, it is something much more. It does not come in a box, it does not come with a fox, it is something which God unlocks.

**“And the Grinch, with his Grinch-feet ice cold in the snow,
stood puzzling and puzzling, how could it be so? It came without
ribbons. It came without tags. It came without packages, boxes
or bags. And he puzzled and puzzled 'till his puzzler was sore.
Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. What if
Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. What if
Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more.”~ Dr Seuss, How
the Grinch stole Christmas.**

So, again. A blessed Christmas here in the heat of July, and all through the year to you. May the “something more” which God makes possible be the gift you have always waited for.