

Quotes about Gift Giving

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.” - Luke 6:38 – (NKJV)

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” - John 3:16 - (NKJV)

December Birthdays

4 Clint Oster	28 Jim Nichols	30 Richard Karns
17 Bill Brown	29 Joshua Morales	30 Jeremiah Morales
27 Sue Tanner		31 Bob Pescador

December Anniversaries

9 Arnold & Maria Morales
12 Peggie & Ron Woodruff
18 Jim & Marie Burruss

Regular Meeting Times

Sunday.....9:45 a.m.
Sunday.....10:45 a.m.
Sunday.....6:00 p.m.
Wednesday.....7:00 p.m.

Preacher
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Calvary, Not Bethlehem

By Tom Wacaster

It happened almost 2,000 years ago, but the residual effect is still with us today. Every time we partake of the Lord's Supper we are reminded of that moment in history when the sins of mankind were laid upon the back of our Savior, when the Son of God bled and suffered on Calvary that you and I might live.

For some reason, though, men have a desire to celebrate the birth of Christ rather than His death. We decorate our houses with glittering lights, wrap our presents in pretty paper, and sing holiday songs for approximately twenty-eight days. Then we go on our merry way wishing each other a Happy New Year until the next "black Friday" when the latest gadgets and electronic marvels hit the shelves of Best Buy and Wal-mart.

While the birth of Jesus is most certainly a significant historical event, it was not God's wish that we celebrate the birth of Jesus once a year, but that we remember His death once a week. Every time we break the bread and drink the cup we are reminded of Calvary! The late Johnny Ramsey so eloquently captured the idea:

“On a hill far away that old rugged Cross beckons lost mankind to a nobler pursuit of life. Out of the depths of despair and ruin untold comes a clarion call from heaven that provides salvation for wayfaring men estranged from God to come back home to the Father who runs to meet the prodigals once enveloped in the pigpen of iniquity. The compelling love of the One who died for all (2 Corinthians 5:14) draws us to a richer, fuller, and purpose-filled life that responds to the suffering Savior in obedience, gratitude, and loyalty.”

(The Words of Truth, April 25, 1997).

The real impact of Christianity is not found in a manger one cold December morning. In fact, evidence suggests that our Lord was born in the early to mid-spring rather than the dead of winter. The heralding angels, the shepherds, and the wise men all played a part in ushering the Lord and Savior into this world. We cannot, yea would not, diminish the importance of that moment when Mary gave birth to the incarnate Son of God. Without His birth there would have been no life; and without His sinless life there would have been no value in His death beyond that of ordinary mortal men.

However, it is not His birth but His death that provides hope. It is His death that unleashed the power of heaven to save men from their sins. It is Calvary, not Bethlehem, to which the eyes of lost humanity must turn for hope. It is Calvary, not Bethlehem, where Jesus paid the price for the sins of humanity. It is Calvary, not Bethlehem, where Jesus fulfilled God's law, satisfied divine wrath, and opened the fountain of life from whence has poured forth the cleansing blood of our Lord for twenty centuries. Yes, all this happened at Calvary, not Bethlehem!

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Galatians 6:14

They Know a Lot about Gift Giving

Answering a knock on the door of his African hut a missionary found a native boy holding a up a large fish. The boy said, "Preacher, you taught us to give at least one tenth, so here - I've brought you my tenth". As the missionary gratefully took the fish, he questioned the young lad. "Where are the other nine fish?" At this, the boy beamed and said, "Oh, they're still back in the river. I'm going back to catch them now". That's faith (cf. Malachi 3:10)!

Another African boy listened carefully as the teacher explained why Americans give presents to each other on holidays. "The gift is an expression of our friendship for each other", she said. When the next holiday came, the boy brought the teacher a seashell of

lustrous beauty. "Where did you ever find such a beautiful shell?" the teacher asked. The youth told her that there was only one spot where such extraordinary shells could be found - a certain bay several miles away. "Why, it's gorgeous", said the teacher. "But you shouldn't have gone all that way to get a gift for me". His eyes brightening, the boy answered, "Long walk part of gift" (read 2 Samuel 24:24).

"Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty,"

Proverbs 3:9-10

Commitment

I Will...

- Like **Paul**, forget those things which are behind, and press onward (Philippians 3:13);
- Like **David**, lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence comes my help (Psalm 121:1);
- Like **Abraham**, trust implicitly in my God (James 2:23);
- Like **Enoch**, walk daily in fellowship with my heavenly Father (Genesis 5:22);
- Like **Jehoshaphat**, prepare my heart to seek God (2 Chronicles 19:2-3);
- Like **Moses**, choose rather to suffer, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Hebrews 11:24-25);
- Like **Daniel**, commune with God at all times (Daniel 6:10);
- Like **Job**, be patient under all circumstances (Job 13:15-16; James 5:11).
- Like **Caleb** and **Joshua**, refuse to be discouraged because of superior numbers (Numbers 13:30; 14:6-9)
- Like **Gideon**, advance even though my friends be few (Judges 7:7);
- Like **Aaron** and **Hur**, uphold the hands of the leaders of the church with prayer and support (Exodus 17:12);
- Like **Andrew**, strive to lead my brother to Christ (John 1:40-42);
- Like **Stephen**, manifest a forgiving spirit toward all who seek my hurt (Acts 7:60). - Author Unknown -