

Greetings in the name of the Babe of Bethlehem,

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 18:3 (CEB) – Larger reading: Matthew 18:1-5

“... I assure you that if you don’t turn your lives around and become like this little child, you will definitely not enter the kingdom of heaven.”

STORY: “Christmas in the Heart” – author unknown

It is Christmas in the mansion,
 Yule-log fires and silken frocks;
It is Christmas in the cottage,
 Mother’s filling little socks.
It is Christmas on the highway,
 In the thronging, busy mart;
But the dearest, truest Christmas
 Is the Christmas in the heart.

OBSERVATION:

Seeing Christmas through the eyes of my 24-month old granddaughter (she is now 12 years old) is/was a wonderful experience. She doesn’t remember much from last year and so, this year everything is a surprise ... a glorious surprise ... an “Oh, My Gosh” moment. Oh, the wonder of it all! Our tree was up and the lighted Snow Village beneath its branches was all in place when she came one afternoon. Her eyes were wide, she simply stood still taking it all in. Evidently, she took her sit and with starry-eyed amazement tried to take it all in. Oh, the wonder of it all!

As adults we have a tendency to have the attitude of “been there, done that” and the magic of the decorations, lighted homes, gifts wrapped and special foods prepared does not hold our imaginations for very long. We’ve lost the wonder of it all.

There are those who say that Christmas is for children. AND they might be right! Especially when you consider that Jesus shared that we are to become like a little child in order to enter the Kingdom of God. Scholars have debated the meaning behind Jesus’ words, but from my perspective I understand it to mean that one must have a child like acceptance, a child like wonder, a child like trust, a child like excitement ... to be a part of God’s glorious kingdom. Conclusion: Christmas is indeed for all of God’s children ... which includes you and me. Also remember that there is a difference in being “child like” and being “childish”.

Christmas is preceded by a season of preparation called Advent. Unlike the commercial enterprises, that begin to display their “fabulous” new merchandize - which will make (in their opinion) your life complete and whole - starting sometime in July or August, the churches time of preparation is much shorter. The true glorious gift of Christmas, which really does make our life complete and whole – beyond anything that we could ever imagine or purchase from a commercial market – is given a mere four

weeks for us to make all the necessary preparation for His coming. Oh, the wonder of it all!

The question has always been ... will we be ready for Christmas? AND I don't mean with our cards mailed, house decorated, presents bought and wrapped, cookies baked, parties attended (remember Pre-Covid when we could attend such gatherings) and food prepared for the festive meal. Rather, will the "house" where our spirit resides be ready when He breaks into our world this year? Remember that our God is full of surprises and thus, when we least expect it He is there in a way that we least expect it. Oh, the wonder of it all!

Remember that those who lived in the world during Jesus' birth were expecting a king and conqueror ... what they received was a baby. Surprise! With God, always expect the unexpected ... the unimaginable ... the unlikely. Who would have thought that God would come in the form of a baby to save His world? God is full of surprises. How will God surprise the child in us this year? Here's to being surprised by joy ... and the wonder of it all!

QUOTE: *A Life of intimacy with God is Characterized by Joy.* ~ Oswald Chambers

PRAYER:

Help me to recapture the wonder of it all. Help me to be surprised by your presence. Help me to be captured by the marvelous beauty of this special season. Help me to be surprised by your unexpected gift of life. In the name of Jesus. Amen

And the faith journey continues, Pastor Jim
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***Prayer and Healing Service is today at 11:00
Also, if you would like to receive Prayer Request
please call the church office and ask to be added to the Prayer Warriors
List.***

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