

Good morning to all the wonderful Saints at Manatee Life,

SCRIPTURE:

2 Corinthians 5:20 (CEB) – 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

“So we are ambassadors who represent Christ. God is negotiating with you through us. We beg you as Christ’s representatives, ‘Be reconciled to God!’”

STORY:

For me ‘twas not the truth you taught,
 To you so clear, to me so dim,
But when you came to me, you brought
 A sense of Him.

And from your eyes He beckons me
 And from your heart His love is shed,
Till I lose sight of you and see
 The Christ instead.

- Author Unknown

REFLECTION:

Well, it has happened again. I’m not really surprised because this isn’t the first time. I agreed to be a part of a “Secret Santa” exchange with a group of individuals that I really don’t know and who really don’t know me. Fortunately, I picked a person that I did know and so I could purchase a gift, under \$10, that I thought that he would enjoy.

Unfortunately, the person that picked my name just went to the store and purchased a generic male gift. Now I have something sitting in my closet waiting for the opportunity to be re-gifted. Yes, that’s right, I re-gift. And, if you are honest with yourself, so have you and probably have a funny story to go along with the act. Not all the time, but there are occasions here and there when something has come into our possession that really cannot be used and appreciated ... and so, instead of asking for a receipt so you can return it or taking it to Goodwill or just throwing it away, it becomes a part of the re-gifting box.

This doesn’t happen often and hasn’t happened in sometime, but the minute that I unwrapped my gift from my “Secret Santa” I knew that I would never use it ... but I knew someone who could and would. In fact, it will become one his stocking stuffer for next Christmas.

I believe that re-gifting has gotten a bad name in recent years. It sounds tacky, but it is a creative way to “use” those unusable gifts. The first time that I re-gifted wasn’t really that long ago. We were given a set of uniquely decorated glasses. In the store we wouldn’t have given them a second look, but they came into our possession as a hostess gift. We thanked the giver and later put them away in one of the extra closets wondering what we were going to do with them.

Our solution was quickly solved. In a Bible share group we participated in I noticed that the decor of our host and hostess was an exact match to our new set of glasses ... and they hosted an annual Super Bowl Party. We usually took them a box of candy as a hostess gift, but not this next time. Out of the closet the glasses came, rewrapped and taken with us to the party. Later we were told that they were exactly what they had been looking for, but couldn't find. There they were on the counter for all of us to use as we shared the evening snacks and munchies.

When you think about it we are actually directed to re-gift the precious gift we received in Jesus Christ. Actually we are told to give it away ... often ... to as many people we can ... to share the Good News with others ... to "re-gift" so to speak. So, don't put your faith in a closet somewhere or in an empty dresser drawer only to be brought out on certain occasions when the "giver" is coming by to visit or when you think that it won't offend someone (like when you are around other believers) ... re-gift the faith and the relationship. Besides it just might be something that the other individual has been "looking for something exactly like it." You never know!

QUOTE:

"An American Express survey about Christmas gifts found that the fruitcake was chosen most often (31%) from a list of "worst" holiday gifts. It even finished ahead of "no gift at all." When asked how to dispose of a bad gift, 30% would hide it in the closet, 21% would return it, and 19% would give it away. This suggests that the Christmas fruitcake might get recycled as a gift for the host of New Year's party." ~ Resource

PRAYER:

Such a precious gift, O Lord, that you have given to the likes of me. I know that I am not worthy of such a gift, but I also know that you expect me to give it away as often as I can to as many people as possible. Give me to conviction and courage share the gift of Christ and his love with everyone I meet today. In that precious name of Jesus. Amen

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The New Year is coming. Will it be truly a new year in your relationship with Christ?