

Scott's Thoughts -- Merry Christmas!!!!

Written by Scott Evans

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Christmas Day is upon us! Recently at work, we were all talking about some of our favorite Christmas memories and favorite gifts that we gave or received over the years. My all-time favorite Christmas gift is an easy one. I received it as an adult in 1998. My mom bought me a silver-swirl Persian kitten! She was adorable and became my constant companion for the next 15 years. In fact, it was this summer when she got sick and I had to have her put to sleep.

After I got home I continued to think of the many great Christmas memories I had over the years. I have been blessed to have many wonderful memories of Christmas all the way from my childhood to last year and I am anticipating another great one this year with family and friends! However, there is one Christmas that stands out and that is the one that I want to talk about in this article today.

The year was 2003. Nine days prior to Christmas in 2003, my mom had passed away. I had returned to Lancaster, PA where I lived at the time a few days before Christmas and had returned to work. I was the only member of my family living in Lancaster and, while I had several friends, most of them had their own plans for Christmas. I had a few people invite me to their homes for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day but I turned all of them down opting instead to spend the day alone and in the way that I wanted to.

My church in Lancaster had a Christmas Eve service that I attended. I believe I cried through all of it at as some of my mom's favorite songs were sung and I sat there remembering many of the amazing Christmases that I shared with her and my family. I went home after that service and I went straight to bed. I was exhausted from the emotional week I had after my mom passed away. I slept very well that night for the first time since she had gone on to Heaven.

Christmas Day I actually slept in until about 9:00 AM. I had decided that instead of spending the day alone, I would go over to homeless shelter and help serve lunch. It was the first time I had ever done anything like that on a holiday and I was very moved and humbled by the experience. It was a "tradition" I continued for the rest of the time I lived in Pennsylvania. I returned home from that and I unwrapped the gifts that people had bought for me. I ate many of the traditional things that my mom and I had shared for the Christmases we spent together after my dad passed away. However, to be perfectly honest ... I spent a good portion of the day feeling very sorry for myself and having a giant self-pity party!

As the evening approached I remember that I sat down on the couch. As I sat there thinking about my mom and my family's traditions, my favorite Christmas gift from years gone by, jumped up next to me. As I sat there petting my cat, God began to speak to me in that still, small voice inside of each Christian. I began to realize that Christmas Day is not about spending time with family, feeding the homeless, unwrapping presents or eating our favorite foods. All of those things are wonderful traditions but Christmas is about celebrating the Birth of Jesus Christ! Yes, my mom was no longer with me on this earth but she was celebrating with Jesus and someday, I will see her again! That fact alone is reason to celebrate!

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I picked up my Bible and I began to read the Book of Luke. Of course, Luke, chapter 2 is the Christmas Story and I loved reading it but I did not stop there. I continued to read and before I knew it, I had read the entire Book of Luke! I read about the miracles that Jesus performed, the sermons He preached, the people He touched and healed and then, of course, His crucifixion, His resurrection and His ascension.

Just like that, my day was transformed! Oh sure, I still missed my mom terribly and I still do, especially at Christmas BUT I was reminded the real reason we celebrate. It has been ten years since that Christmas and every single year since that then, I have read the entire Book of Luke on Christmas day!

We say we celebrate the Birth of Jesus on Christmas! That is a true statement but do we also not celebrate what He did for us on the Cross? Do you know what the first gift of Christmas was? It can be found in one of the most familiar verses in the Bible. John 3:16 says *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."*

Yes! The very first gift was given by God himself when He gave us His Son, Jesus, in the form of a baby on that first Christmas morning. The amazing thing is that God gave Him to us knowing that the world would reject Him and ultimately crucify Him on the cross.

So, this year I challenge you to not only celebrate the Birth of Jesus Christ but also His death and resurrection. After all, it was that Baby born that day in Bethlehem that would go on to bridge the gap for each Christian between here and eternity in Heaven. Do you know Jesus as your personal Savior or is He just a baby in a manger to you? If He is just a baby in a manger to you, let me invite you to get to know the real Jesus Christ! The one who can save your soul and transform your life! [We have a page on this website](#) that will tell you how to invite Christ into your heart today and to begin that personal relationship with Jesus Christ that will transform your life!

Merry Christmas to you and your family from all of us here at the Southern Gospel Music Forum. We wish you many blessings this Christmas and all year through!