



Chaplain's Notes November - December 2001



Hi everyone!

Been thinking about Christmas already, have you? Or are you already dreading the mad rush of shopping which lies ahead of you!? Allow me to share with you some thoughts to help you put this year's Christmas preparations in perspective!

Last month I began to address the issue of what God is doing to get rid of the evil within our own hearts so that we could actually be set free to live life to the full. I shared my own story, and said that God is presently relating to us with grace. A grace that is willing and able to give a person another go, to let us start again, to not hold our past against us, if we are willing to change. Isn't that fantastic!

But there are some more things I believe we need to know about God's grace.

Firstly, the fact that God is presently gracious towards us does not give us a license to sin, to do evil. Now that might seem obvious, but you would be surprised at the number of people down through the ages who have thought they could live however they liked during the week, but as long as they said the right words to God on the weekend, everything would be OK. That's virtually treating God like a bubble-gum machine: just put in your money, turn the handle, and get what you want. No, a thousand times no. Remember, God is good, and He wants to help us be good in every aspect of our lives.

Secondly, and on a more sombre note, there is coming a time when God's grace toward those who refuse Him will end. A time when He will leave us to our own choices. A time at which those who have constantly refused His lovingly outstretched hand actually have to suffer the consequences of their decision. God respects our decisions in this life, and beyond death nothing can change them.

"Now what has all this got to do with Christmas?", I hear you ask. Well, this whole message about grace and what He is wanting to do in our lives for our own good is so important from God's perspective, that about 2001 years ago He actually came to deliver the message personally. He came as a human, to teach about, model, and make possible new lives for us! That's what He did in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate in this season. That's what all this has to do with Christmas!

Listen to one of the most famous passages in the Bible:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him."

John 3:16,17

If we believe the message God gave us through Jesus, there is every reason to rejoice, be happy, and exchange presents!

In this light, I trust and hope that your Christmas season will be full of great joy!

Have a happy and safe Christmas,

