

Christmas Gifts That Won't Break



I want to begin by saying that I've borrowed my title for this article from an Advent study guide by James W. Moore which will be the text for the Buffalo Run adult Sunday school lessons throughout Advent. I also want to thank Nancy Armagast for lending me a copy and extending the invitation to folks across the charge to join them Sunday morning at 9:30 for this study.

Like Mr. Moore I too remember a childhood Christmas gift that didn't last long. One year my parents gave me a gas powered model car, a bright red 1967 Corvette. On Christmas day Dad helped me put on all the chrome trim and decals and test run the motor, because that weekend all my uncles and cousins would be here and he promised we could go up to the school to race it.

This was before the invention of radio controls. You should have seen it. It was Hi-Tech for us. It had special fuel and a battery to help start the engine. The body was sharp and detailed to the max. There was a place on the side of the frame to attach a string so the car would race around in a circle. Finally the day arrived.

All the men and boys headed to the school for the first race. We pounded a nail in the pavement, connected the string, fueled up, and fired up the motor. When we put it down it took off like lightning. Around and around it went. It was awesome. Unfortunately, no one noticed the nail working its way out of the pavement. On about lap ten that Corvette took off on a bee line for the brick school building and shattered on contact.

No one knew what to say, I guess they were waiting to see if I was going to cry. (But I have to admit for a boy, the crash was kind of cool.) When I look back, this was one present that lasted a long time. The car lasted only a few days. Yet it still was one of my favorite Christmas presents, because dad and I worked on it together and it brought me, dad, my brother, uncles and cousins together that afternoon. (If only for about 20 seconds.)

If we all think back on Christmas gifts of long ago, I suspect we will find that most of them are either in the attic or the land fill, and the ones we enjoyed the most were the ones that brought family and friends together.

Truth is that the Christmas spirit is not about the presents it is about our presence!!! That is the message of the very first and most important Christmas gift of all time--- Jesus! Jesus is the fulfillment of God's desire and promise to be with us. Emmanuel means God with us.

Paul tells us ***“For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven....”***
Colossians 1:19-20

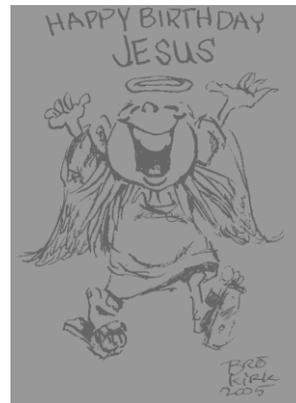
God's love and desire to be with us was so great that God crossed the boundaries of time, space and all reality so that we can know him in the person of Jesus, and while Jesus physically lived with us for only a short time and his ministry and teaching was only about three years in length, the gift of love, joy, and hope through God's presence is still with us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

In this season of Advent as we prepare for Christmas maybe we can prepare in a way that will extend the Christmas spirit of God's love, joy and hope throughout the whole year. Let us devote ourselves to a Christmas presence, the gift of our time and presence. Let us offer gifts of our presence to family and neighbor. Maybe two or three restaurant gift cards for our parents and then join them once a month when they redeem them. Or a plate of cookies for the widow down the street with a note, "don't worry about your walks this winter I'll be by to clean them."

Maybe a board game for our children and a coupon for each month for a game night to play them.

One last closing thought as we are preparing our Christmas list of everyone we will offer a gift expressing our love. Let's keep our Lord at the top of the list.

***A gift for our Lord?
What gift do we bring?
What is a gift that honors the King?
I'll make Him a card.
A card for a king?
A card to say thank you,
It's just the right thing.
But what will I write?
What shall I say?
I treasure your presence,
I'll see you Sunday.***



Let's offer our presence to God in worship, prayer and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ to revive God's gifts of love, joy, and hope in us.

Love, Joy, and Hope be yours,

Pastor Duane