

Christmas Eve

A Reflection for Christmas Eve

Reflections Reflections 23 December 2019

For an old man, I possess an excellent long-term memory. I might not remember where I put my spectacles this morning, but I can recall with vivid clarity Christmas Eve when I must have been just five or six years old, tearing open a netted stocking with several small items in it, which my parents would give me and my brother. To this day I remember that magical moment, down to the smells and the feel of it. I also remember knowing, even at that tender age, as I was told by my theologically trained father, that Christmas was not only about the birth of Jesus — that it goes beyond. At that age I did not understand what lay beyond the birth of Jesus Christ. On the side, do we tell our children and grandchildren what lies beyond Christmas? For that matter, do we pause and reflect on the subject on Christmas Eve?

Pause, I said. A favourite pastor of mine would pray, "Lord, we still our hearts as we come to You." I love that expression, and I often use it as I begin my sermons. We need to still our hearts for the Lord as we pause to reflect on the birth of the Saviour, and its impact upon humanity. Nothing else should be in our hearts. I agree that the Christmas season is filled with lights, glad tidings, and joyful music — and, let us be honest, the season is filled with plain old busyness. As the twenty-fifth of December approaches, we fall prey to that seasonal bug of busyness. With all the decorating, shopping, sorting, baking, wrapping, and attending Christmas performances and activities, our schedules are never more full. But in the midst of all that, we must find time for reflection.

We should know that our frantic preparations are for something far greater than simply making our holiday celebrations "picture perfect." When we allow ourselves to pause, even for a second, we remember that the Christmas season is about preparing our hearts to celebrate, once again, the wonderful and miraculous coming of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and His teaching to look outward — to think of those millions of children who will not open a Christmas present wrapped in colourful paper; those millions who will be struggling to find a square meal, let alone a sumptuous Christmas dinner; all those who died fighting for freedom from what binds them; all those who are being persecuted; all those who are sick and uncared for. This list is long. We cannot reach all of them. But there is always some small good thing one can do for someone in need. If we can do that, it will be one step forward towards the Kingdom of Jesus, and it will make our Christmas celebrations meaningful. It is against the backdrop of this line of

thinking that I wrote all those Advent devotionals over the past twenty-three days.

And today I wish you a very blessed Christmas.

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