

Another Word December 15, 2020

To our friends and family of First Christian Church

A few have asked if we will be taking a special Christmas offering. The simple answer is, no. We feel that providing meals, gift bags, face shields for speech therapy, and the ongoing card ministry have been a wonderful alternative outreach, "in lieu of" collecting donations as we have in the past. During such a challenging time, we have been able to make a tremendous impact in our community, and will continue to do so, with other special projects into 2021.

As a reminder, our weekly services are available on our website and on YouTube. Each Tuesday, the previous Sunday service will be shown in our sanctuary at 1pm.

Our scriptures for this coming Sunday, December 20th are: Luke 1:46b-55, and Luke 1:26-38. "Mary said yes."

Please remember all those who are having health issues, caught up in the virus, as well as those in your hearts who may need help and guidance. May we pray.

Oh Holy and gracious Father. You and you alone know our hearts. You know our wants, needs, our sorrows, our fears. We often turn to you, but only when we have nowhere else to turn. But then you remind us, that we should always turn to you first. For you are our one and only God. You are our savior, our redeemer, and our light that shows us the way. May we always keep you first in our lives, knowing that in all circumstances, you hold us in your strong and loving arms. We thank you for your hope, peace, and joy, and wait with eagerness to celebrate the gift of love you sent in your son, Jesus the Christ. Amen

As the song says, “He’s makin’ his list, checkin’ it twice, gonna find out who’s.....” you know how it goes. Did you ever make a list of what you wanted for Christmas? Somehow, socks never make it on the list. But what was always at the top of the list? The very item you wanted the most.

You would underline it, star it, circle it, and even highlight it in yellow. Oh the other items were wanted too, but that one was a make or break deal on Christmas morning. Maybe you would start as early as October by dropping hints, leaving notes, pictures, and doing most anything to let Santa know what you really wanted.

Donita and I remember one Christmas when both our girls were caught up in the Cabbage Patch Doll craze. Somehow, every girl in the nation wanted one, and it was, as they say, going to be a wanted, but hard to find item. We usually bought presents after Thanksgiving, but in early November, when the girls started asking, Don felt that we had better buy the dolls before they were all gone. Good call! Unlike many, our girls had a very happy Christmas Day. The reason was, we heard their request, and acted on it.

It took me many years to realize that this is very much how God acts with us. The powerful lesson here is, prayer really works.

Jesus tells us in Mark 11: 24, “whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” Think about that!

“Believe you have received it” - past tense, and “it will be yours” - future tense. You don’t have it yet, but you are to go on as if you do. Jesus is telling us how to get our prayers answered.

Our girls requested something and we responded almost immediately, and got what they asked for. At that moment, they had them but they

didn't know it. We answered their request, but waited until the right time to give them. If we acted too early, Christmas would have been ruined.

This is what I believe goes on when we pray to God for things that matter in our lives. Maybe you have a wish or a need. Something that is big. Possibly you have a need that keeps reoccurring and is at the top of your list. Maybe you've even underlined it, starred it, and highlighted it. But you haven't received an answer. However, based on Jesus' words, it could very well be that the prayer has already been answered, but He just hasn't let you know. It may not be the right time. Too early, and it could be ruined. We are to use this time to wait on the Lord, and to grow in faith. It's a time to learn to trust in ways you may have never thought of before.

Jesus is saying that we need to proceed in faith in the direction of what we've asked for, and to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Live in faith, as if "you have received it" and "it will be yours," trusting that our loving God will always give us what we ask for, unless it is something that would ultimately harm us. And the good news is, if what you have asked for is good, He has already got it for you. If it is in line with God's will, know that there is an exciting day coming when you will receive the gift your Father has had for you since the day you first started asking. And it will be delivered right on time!

In His Peace,

*Rich*