

## Christmas Not Sparing

In the Name of Jesus our newborn Savior, dear fellow redeemed by the Christ of Christmas:

It was Christmas my freshman year in high school. My Great Grandpa Werner wasn't saying much. For several summers I'd made sure to stop in and visit him a least once a week. But that winter it was clear I wouldn't see him again. And sure enough that spring he was gone when.

One by one over the years, all that generation passed away. Their children now need care as our parents while we watch our own children raising our grandchildren. How quickly fly the years. And yet, why is it that I look forward to seeing them all again. Great Grandma Werner who gave me *My Prayer Book* (CPH) that I still use every day. Her daughter we called, Nani, who wrote in my Confirmation Hymnal (TLH) to always "think about every word."

You don't have to find your way back to a ranch house no longer in the family. You don't need to reach into the cobwebs of dusty memories. You only need to go to that tiny stable as the early dawn is rising. After the shepherds have returned to quiet fields that only lately rang out with the song of the angels. Just peek inside to see the virgin mother singing to her Child of the ages. He is the Promised One in whom the hopes and fears of all the years are met. How silently the Gift was given that calms our fears and stirs our hopes because God gave us all **Christmas Not Sparing**.

Not every Christmas tree tumbled with wonderful presents. With seven siblings it's hard not to get socks and underwear. But one year Mom went all out for us older boys, Roc and me. Usually \$70, for just \$35 apiece, she found some awesome calculators that could add/subtract, multiply/divide! No % nor battery, but they were so small compared to ancient adding machines. Gifts long gone.

What remains is the heritage of faith, God's grace in that Gift of the Baby Jesus in the manger. He is the Gift that keeps on giving as the only One who has just begun to give for all eternity.

Moses saw Him coming as ***"the LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, <sup>7</sup> maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation."*** (Exodus 34:6f NIV84) He must really love to bless when His *mercy* goes to millions in those thousands of generations while His curses only crash the three or four generations that continue to hate Him in stubborn rebellion. (Deuteronomy 5:9)

There has always been some sadness mixed with Christmas. Even when ***"the Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."*** Sadly, ***"He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God."*** (John 1:14, 11-13 EHV<sup>1</sup>) This rebirth by faith, this second birth gives God's unsparing Christmas.

The Lord's Apostle Paul has just said some awesome things in this great Victory Chapter of Romans 8. How can you believe any of them? You don't know what to pray, but ***"the Spirit helps us in our weakness"***? ***"We do not know what we should pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that are not expressed in words"***? How can you be sure that ***"he who searches our hearts knows...the mind of the Spirit..."*** to make prayers in your place that please God the Almighty, the Holy One? And this of all the awesome wonders. How can you say, ***"We know..."***? ***"We know that all***

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<sup>1</sup> EHV ~ Evangelical Heritage Version (<http://wartburgproject.org>) © 2019. NPH: 800-662-6022, Amazon-Kindle, LOGOS.

*things work together for the good of those who love God, for those who are called according to his purpose.” Really? No bad days? Just days for God to work out His divine designs of eternal blessings for you? That God knew you by name from eternity and mapped out your life so that you were “predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son...called...justified...glorified”?* (Romans 8:26–30)

These are some amazing gifts. If they were under your tree, if you could open them, wouldn't your whole life be squared away no matter what? The world could fall apart around your ears. Your socks and all could wear thin. Technology could die. If only God's gifts could be real!

And there He rests with His virgin Mother. The oxen and sheep standing by as stepfather Joseph looks on. There in Mary's eyes is the beginning of many a sweet memory of her firstborn, her Miracle Son, the very Son of God! But, oh, so soon Simeon in the temple will warn Mary of a sword that will pierce her own soul too. So soon the family will have to flee that quiet town to escape the bloody sword of a very paranoid King Herod. Poverty and pain will mark her Son's path through village, town and countryside until great drops of blood and sweat stain the soil of a garden. And bitter cries of “Crucify!” will tear the air where her own Son will be forsaken by His real Father in heaven. How could all this be **Christmas Not Sparing?**

The little children know. You said it so well in your Sunday School Christmas Service last Sunday. And looking back on your life, the older children of God who are well on their way from grace to glory – you know it too. The Holy Spirit asks and answers all our questions through the pen of the Lord's Apostle Paul:

✚ *What then will we say about these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Indeed, he who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also graciously give us all things along with him?* (Romans 8:31–32 EHV)

It's because we get so wrapped up in ourselves that we need this. It's because we are all infected by a traitor on the inside that hates God and loves no one but self. It's because we are surrounded by wayward souls that deny God's very existence. They follow the fallen angel who only wants their souls in eternal misery with him. Sadly, still today, we need God's **Christmas Not Sparing!**

And there in the manger, saved on the pages of the Holy Scriptures of the Bible we have the eternal assurance that cannot be beat. God gave us His best when He gave us His Son. And He did not spare His one and only begotten Son from the suffering that would appease God's wrath at sin forever. You, my fellow pilgrims to the manger, are seeing God's amazing grace once again in that tiny Child you just want to hold close to your heart. Every reason to run from God is whisked away like the morning mist. Here is a heart that beats for you. Hands that will be pierced for you. A head once crowned with thorns, now crowned with glory that rules for you. Since the crucified One has also risen from the dead, as He now rules in glory over all, *if God is for us, who can be against us?* And since He *did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all*, what could possibly keep God from turning all to good that seems most ill? What could prevent our gracious Father in heaven from helping us our calling to fulfill?

God knows all your needs. He knows how best to bring you home at last to loved ones forever. Our God will *graciously give us all things along with him* – that tiny Babe of Bethlehem.

Merry Christmas – **Christmas Not Sparing.** Amen.