



Monday Matters December 2, 2013

Where Is That Joy?

Twas two nights before Christmas and all through the house, not a tree was standing or ornament in place. This describes our first Christmas, living in northern Wisconsin. We finally decided to brave the cold, wind and snow and headed out to try to find a Christmas tree. We looked all over town and eventually found a tree lot on Highway 53. We got out of our VW Beetle and headed towards what few trees were left. We found just the right size tree and discovered it was half price. We stuffed the tree in the trunk. (Did I mention we owned a Beetle? Trunk in the front of the car?) We drove off looking a little funny but we had our first Christmas tree. We brought it home, set it up and decorated it with some ornaments from Linda's grandmother.

Now we could say *"Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse."* Oops! Not totally true. We were sound asleep in bed when we were rudely awakened by the sound of glass breaking. We quickly got out of bed to find our Christmas tree lying on the wooden floor, glass ornaments shattered everywhere. Then we found the creature that had stirred that cold night sitting in the corner, our pet kitten, who had tried to be an ornament on top of the tree.



Joyful, Joyful
sung by David Phelps

Quote of the Week

"This day and your life are
God's gift to you, so give
thanks and be joyful always."

~ Author Unknown ~

Monday Matters

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Oh, what joy Christmas brought us that early morning after braving the sub-zero temperatures finding the tree.

We really did have a joyful time that year, our first of 44 more and counting. To some people, maybe most, there isn't that much joy in Christmas. It's just another day. You've spent the last month shopping and spending money you don't have. You're buying groceries by the carload. You're preparing the house for family, decorating, baking cookies, cooking, wrapping presents, running out to the store to get that gift you forgot, and washing all those dishes.

Did I fail to mention going to all the choir practices to help with the Christmas musical at church? Or the practices and performances for the kid's school and church programs? By the time you sat down to share gifts, you're thinking, "Where is the joy of Christmas?"

Being joyful at Christmas might be harder than most times during the year. It could be caused by financial stress, health issues, memories of loved ones, or having a cat that has up-ended your tree. So, early in the Christmas season, I want to share "5 Suggestions for Finding More Joy at Christmas" that Ron Edmondson used in one of his sermons to combat holiday stress and increase joy.

- ***Lower expectations of others*** - *We shouldn't hold others to expectation we set for them. People, even the best of people, will disappoint us.*
- ***Increase your investment in others*** - *Something supernatural happens when we share with others. We are to give and extend grace, as it was given to us.*
- ***Examine your life and address known sin*** - *You can't have joy with a holy God if you are living contrary to His desires for your life.*
- ***Change your Perspective*** - *Choosing to be greatly joyful is not based on circumstances, but comes by perspective.*
- ***Set your eyes on the prize*** - *If you're struggling to find joy in life, set your eyes on Jesus; the author and perfecter of your faith."*

The word "joy" best captures the mood and the spirit of Christmas. It means despite any circumstances in

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by Linda J. Nelson

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your life you should have joy. This is supposed to be a joyous season. Jesus came so we could experience joy, the inner contentment and calm delight. Find the proper perspective, regardless of your circumstances, and you will find the joy.

by Ron Nelson