

# The gift that truly keeps on giving

*But let all who take refuge in You be glad, let them ever sing for joy; And may You shelter them, that those who love Your name may exult in You. –Psalm 5:11*

*Glory in His holy name; Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad. –Psalm 105:3*

*When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. –Matthew 2:10*

## **Our Fallen Human Nature**

There is no chicken little (the sky is falling) when you have Jesus. We rejoice because no matter our circumstances, the Lord is with us. Philippians 4:4.

As I write this, our newly elected president has not yet even taken his oath of office and people are deciding he's not "draining the swamp" the way they expected him to do. There is no patience, no waiting on God, there is an immediate rush to judgment.

Stop it! Wait on the Lord! We believed our new president, now let's see what he can do. Realize that he may make some mistakes! Haven't we all!

Why is it that our fallen human nature immediately runs to negativity? Why is it that we immediately want to destroy any hope or promise God has given us? It's our nature...that old sinful nature. And the Lord knows just exactly how we are! We so often fail to rest in HIM!



Remember Abraham and Sarah? The story starts in Genesis 11:30. The promise of God to Abraham would take twenty-five years to come to fulfillment. Of course, Abraham would never have known that it would take that long. He trusted God and knew that He would keep His word, and until then he must wait on the Lord. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to wait. Sometimes waiting for an answer to prayer is often part of the answer. We are far too impatient and want answers now, yet God in His gracious plan and purpose allows us to wait until His time.

Sadly, Abraham listened to his wife Sarah rather than waiting on God to do what He said he would do. Sarah thought she needed to help God, not understanding fully that with Him, all things are possible, and His promises are forever. Believers know the rest of this story.

Wait on the Lord, and wait on Him in prayer.

### **Rejoicing in Adversity**

True joy comes from knowing the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and His Son, Messiah Jesus. Here is the true story of a [Chinese pastor who was imprisoned for 18 years by the Communists because of his faith](#). Day after day, year after year, he was assigned to work in the prison camp's cesspool. Every morning he had to wade into that stinking hole and spend his day scooping out the human waste. He was given this job as a special punishment because he kept holding tenaciously to his faith.



The pastor was grateful for the assignment because of the solitude he had. The stench was so bad that even the guards stayed far away. So, the pastor had the freedom to pray aloud, sing hymns to the Lord, and recite Scripture. The cesspool had become a garden of communion with God. And what did he sing? In the Garden, by Charles A. Miles, a 1913 hymn.

*I come to the garden alone,  
While the dew is still on the roses,  
And the voice I hear falling on my ear  
The Son of God discloses.*

*Refrain:*

*And He walks with me, and He talks with me,  
And He tells me I am His own;  
And the joy we share as we tarry there,  
None other has ever known.*

*He speaks, and the sound of His voice  
Is so sweet the birds hush their singing,  
And the melody that He gave to me  
Within my heart is ringing.  
I'd stay in the garden with Him,  
Though the night around me be falling,  
But He bids me go; through the voice of woe  
His voice to me is calling.*

Out of the hardest of circumstances and worst of situations this man's experience is a testimony of how God is in control no matter how horrible the situation might be.

If Pastor George Chen was willing to do all this to stand for his faith under such adversity; how can we even complain about the small adversities in our daily life?



**Fire and Loss in East**

## **Tennessee**

Drought struck our area this summer, with high temperatures and no rain. Our Smoky Mountains were timber waiting to burn. The fires started, caused from arson by two underage teens, burning 17,000 acres of the Smoky Mountains. In the tourist area of Gatlinburg and Pigeon Forge, thousands of homes and businesses burned to the ground; the latest count is 14 dead. I've never seen a summer here so very hot and dry, not in the nearly 30 years we've lived here.

Tennessee is the Volunteer State, and rebuilding will take place, but the loss to so many is heartbreaking and devastating. The Fire Chief lost his own home while helping others. The Mayor of Gatlinburg lost his home as well as his resort which was extra income. Yet, their worries were all for their own people, and prayers for rain, which we received the next day. We rejoiced, and praised the Lord for His mercy.

Now comes the cleanup and the much-needed help. Dolly Parton is giving \$1,000 a month to every family who lost their homes. This will go on for six months. She has also donated \$1 million to help rebuild, and she has even bigger plans.

This is the buckle of the Bible belt, and the majority of people know the Lord, and trust in Him, even through tears and loss. One man lost his wife and two daughters, and has written a letter of forgiveness to the two teens, stating that this is what Jesus would have him do.



December is a huge tourist month for Gatlinburg/Pigeon Forge. They're back open, and beautifully decorated for the season, won't you please come!

### **Corrie Ten Boom**

Corrie was a Christian who, along with her father and other family members, helped many Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust during World War II. She was imprisoned for her actions. She watched her sister, Betsy, die in Ravensbruck concentration camp.

In 1947 she had come from Holland to defeated Germany to give a talk about forgiveness. Everyone filed out in silence after her speech, and then a man walked up to her and asked her if she really meant what she said about



forgiveness. She saw the man as he had been, a guard at Ravensbruck who had watched her and her sister march by him naked as their clothes and shoes lay strewn in a pile on the floor.

She saw him and memories flashed in her mind. Her natural hatred and revulsion made her stiffen and she fumbled in her pocketbook. The former guard told her he had become a Christian and he reached out his hand to her. Corrie said that her arm felt like lead, and that she didn't know if she could lift it.

She had told the audience of Germans, "When we confess our sins, God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever."

"You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk," the man said. "I was a guard there.

But since that time," he went on, "I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well Fräulein,"—again the hand came out— "will you forgive me?"



Corrie said she stood there, and she remembered what the Lord has said, “If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” She prayed, “Father, help me.”

Finally, her wooden arm reached up to grasp the man’s hand, and she said, “The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.”

“I forgive you, brother!” she cried. “With all my heart!”  
[\[Link\]](#)

### **The Birth of Our Savior**

Christmas is here. The birth of our King of Glory is celebrated every year for one month of joyous preparation, and one special day reminding everyone of His gift to us. It is the season where we say, HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS! We rejoice in the knowledge of our amazing Salvation through Christ the King who came in the simplest and humblest of wrappings.



Jesus is God's gift to all humanity. The perfect sinless gift. The gift of eternal life. The King of Kings, the Lord of Lords! The Lion of the Tribe of Judah!

Life is about what happens beyond the grave. Life is about knowing the God who made you and who gave you the greatest gift you will ever receive.

When you are shopping for gifts, when you are decorating your home, when you are baking and cooking, when you are opening those gifts from under the tree, when you are celebrating with family and friends, remember the perfect everlasting gift, the gift that truly keeps on giving, throughout our lives, and then into eternity.

Despite what we may live through, if we have the King of Glory in our lives, He is the blessed gift who holds us up in both joy and trials.

May your Christmas and your heart reflect the exultation of knowing Him and receiving His special gift. For it is by grace...