

NOT EVERYBODY IS MERRY AT CHRISTMAS

Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:1-18

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Christmas is considered to be the happiest time of the year in the hearts and minds of countless people. There are the decorations, the carols, the songs, the cards, the tree, the Christmas programs, the presents, both buying and receiving/opening, the parties, the trips to relatives, the Christmas dinner, the Church programs, the cantatas, the music, the stories, the manger scene, memories of the Christmases one has had growing up. Everybody is so happy and cheerful. Well, not everyone exactly. For some, Christmas is not always a merry time but nobody ever thinks about those who might not be enjoying Christmas.

1. THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE NOT WELL

- There are those who have had an accident and in hospitals or recuperating at home, unable to get out.
- There are those who are permanent "shut-ins" who never get to go anywhere anymore.
- There are those who are temporarily ill which happens to be during the Christmas season.
- To these and others with similar health difficulties, Christmas can be a very lonely time.
 - Other people are having a good time, going shopping, visiting relatives, having relatives visit them, but being limited to a sick bed or nursing home robs them of all the gaiety of Christmas.
- Perhaps by wishing others a happy time, like the story of Tiny Tim, where he said, "God bless us, every one." Then ask God's blessings upon all one's dear ones and friends can help those who are not well to be able to share in a small way in helping others to have a Merry Christmas.

2. THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE LIVING IN A BROKEN HOME

- Christmas being basically a family time, with all the family gathered together for the special time, but how hard it is when the home has been broken up.
 - A father is missing, A mother is not there, there is no unity or togetherness.
- When a home has been filled with strife and dissension, the children hearing and seeing all the bickering and fussing, the lack of love and the feeling of insecurity robs such a home of a Merry Christmas.
- It doesn't make any difference who is at fault, the Christmas spirit just isn't there anymore.
- When one's home is broken it is like a mirror being broken and one is sitting alone among the broken pieces. One's heart is just not into being merry and celebrating, even at Christmas time.
- Realizing that this world is not perfect and there are others just like "you" who are suffering heart ache from a broken home and there are still some who wish "you" the best and that God does care for "you" can help relieve the ache in one's heart and perhaps make Christmas a time of change.

3. THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE

1. The first Christmas after a loved one has died is a very difficult time.
 - Seeing the empty chair or bed, no matter how deep one's faith is in the Lord or that he/she awaits you at Heaven's gates, does not take away the pain of that loved one's absence.
 - There seems to be no cure for the heartache and loneliness but in time healing can come.
 - When that loved one who is no gone helped put up the tree, wrap gifts, did a hundred different things at Christmas time to help make Christmas a happy time is no longer there, it may be that one does not want to participate in the gaieties of the season.
2. There is a way, however, to still be glad during the Christmas season and that is by remembering the things done with that loved one who is no longer there.
 - Things done at Christmas in years past can be remembered and make it seem as if that

loved one is still present.

- There will come a day when YOU, too, will leave this earth and be rejoined to that loved one who is now gone, IF both YOU and that departed love one belong to God's Family through belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Find someone else who also is in sorrow, alone, and take that person a gift, invite over for a meal, share the joys of Christmas.

- Then remember that your loved one is spending his/her first Christmas in the very presence of the Lord Jesus Christ

4. THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED LOSS

1. Some may have recently lost their jobs.
 - Employed for many years, now suddenly let go, discharged. How is that person supposed to feel during the Christmas season?
 - How will he/she support his/her family?
 - What will Christmas mean in that home?

2. There are some whose homes have been destroyed by storms, floods, fires.
 - What does Christmas hold for people who have lost everything?

3. Consider what one still has who has suffered a loss.
 - What about one's health?
 - There are those who are blind, deaf, crippled, bed-fast.
 - What about one's family?
 - There are some whose family is separated, husband and wife parted, children in foster homes.
 - What about food to eat, clothes to wear?
 - There are people who are starving, naked.

4. Remember what Mary and Joseph had.
 - They were beyond poor for they had to borrow a stable, put their newborn baby in an animal's feeding crib for a bed, yet the glory of God was there.
 - Try to let Christmas be a time when one sees what is really important for there are things that one still has who thinks that he/she has lost everything by losing his/her job.

5. THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE GROWN OLD

1. No doubt Christmas is a joyful time for the young person and especially the children as well as the family where every one is well and there is money for gifts, gathering around the Christmas tree and singing Christmas carols.

2. What about those who have reached the senior adult age, alone all the time, maybe even in a wheel chair or in a nursing home, with nobody to visit them? What does Christmas mean to them?
 - For many of the senior adults, they dread Christmas more than any other time of the year for they are "left out" of Christmas activities.
 - Why ignored? Why forgotten? Why passed by? Because everybody else is YOUNG and what the senior adult is experiencing he/she didn't back in his/her younger years when he/she, too was so busy during the Christmas season didn't ever think of - what about the "old" people?

3. What is left for the senior man or woman? Joy, peace of heart and mind, a desire to love others, a longing to be able to do those things of the past they did at Christmas, and to find someone worse off than him/herself and invite them to share some of the Christmas joy with.
 - For those senior adults who are Christians, there is joy to know that there is a divinely prepared place waiting and before long, they will be escorted to that new place the Lord has been preparing.
 - Yes, Christmas can be merry for the senior adult who is one Christmas closer to that great day of meeting the Lord Jesus in person.

6. THERE ARE THOSE WHO SEEM TO HAVE EVERYTHING ALREADY

1. How can Christmas be a merry time to those who have been successful and have everything they want?
 - An inheritance, a big salary raise, an insurance settlement, married to a very wealthy person, something that has put a person "on top of the world" so what can Christmas bring to those who already are merry and happy?
2. What about considering HOW one got all the wealth, riches, comfort and success that seems to make Christmas nothing special.
 - Was it one's own intellect or perfect health? Who brought about such wealth and success? Didn't God have a big hand in all the mercies received?
 - Wasn't others involved somehow and "YOU" were the one who benefited the most?
 - Upon what is the life of the wealthy, need nothing, have everything, built?
3. If such a person is a Christian, Christmas is a time of merriment and celebration, a gift from God centered upon His Son, the Lord Jesus when He came down to earth to dwell among people.
 - Something far greater than earthly wealth, recognition, health, etc., is to be recognized during the Christmas season and that makes even the poorest of all mankind richer than any millionaire which is the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.
4. The real meaning of Christmas is NOT material, physical things of man's imagination, but it is the gift from God to mankind, His Son, Jesus, Savior and everybody, no matter who, can rejoice and have a Merry Christmas.

CONCLUSION:

1. Sadly, not everybody shares the same joyful, excited bubbly atmosphere of Christmas, but they can if they will focus on what the REAL, TRUE Christmas Season is all about.
2. If YOU know somebody who is having difficulty in being "Merry" this Christmas, go to them and help them no matter what, to come back to the real meaning of Christmas and experience JOY.