

Christmas Reflection
by Rev. Frances Savill
Sunday December 24, 2022

I don't know about you, but I always want to make Christmas special each year. I want to have the perfect Christmas, and to make Christmas perfect for my family and friends. But it never happens.

I can't make Christmas perfect.
And the truth is that I can't make Christmas at all.

I can cook some of our favourite foods, the meals might turn out great or they might not. I can find some gifts that I hope people will like – but I can't make Christmas.

Christmas is God's gift offered to us.

There is in all of us a deep longing for the touch of God – to know that we are loved without condition, that we are special, and accepted as we are. I can't make that happen.

But tonight, I can tell you it is God's gift to you, this Christmas. There is a quote by Eugene Peterson that I stumbled across again:
"Brought up in a world where there's no free lunch and trained to use presents for barter, I'm spending the rest of my life receiving this gift with no strings attached, but not doing too well."

That's me. I'm spending the rest of my life receiving this gift – but too often I find myself trying to do it on my own, or wanting to earn it, or setting it aside. And tonight, I'm reminded that this gift from God, Jesus, is His gift to me that I must simply receive.

I get lost in the commercials, the holiday scenes and the busyness of life, and the constant noise around me. I hear the promises of happiness that the stores sell and commercials hype. I see the toys and distractions.

A poet describes it this way:

*Half-sick with excitement and under garish lights
I do it again, year after year after year,
I can't wait to plunder the boxes, then show
And tell my friends: Look what I got!*

*I rip the tissues from every gift but find
That all the labels have lied. Stones.
And my heart a stone.*

Does your heart ever feel like a stone?

Even when you get everything you wanted and more, even when the gifts are great, and the food is all your favourites, and you're with people you love, does your heart ever feel like a stone?

The gift that gives meaning to everything – that changes hearts of stone into hearts of flesh is offered to you here tonight.

The poet continues:

*The lights go out. Later my eyes,
accustomed to the dark, see wrapped
In Christ-foil and ribboned Spirit Colours
The multi-named, love labels
On a faith shape, every name a promise
And every promise a present, made and named
All in the same breath. I accept.*

This night a Saviour was born for you.

This Jesus gift, wrapped by God, and delivered to us this night, has your name on it. It is for you to receive this night and to spend the rest of your life receiving it.

And the love names on the labels are wonderful Counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, Prince of Peace. God's gift to us.

Thanks be to God.