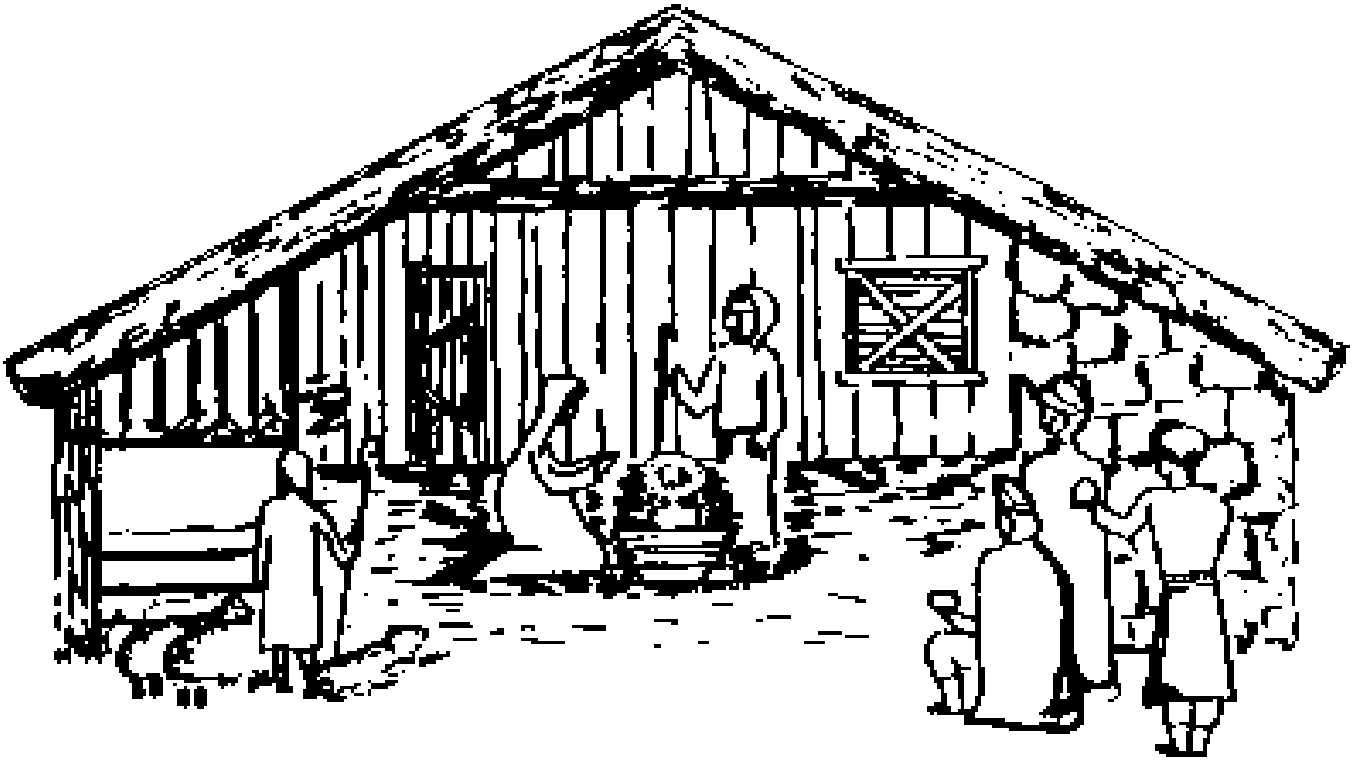


THE SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS



MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR DECEMBER 2004

Luke 2:11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you: he is Christ the Lord.

Blessed be to our Father in Heaven for the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. May we always remember this Season's real meaning of Christmas. May we always remember that Jesus came to this world, to save us from sin and darkness.

May we always be thankful, for His gift of Eternal Salvation.

THE FORGIVENESS OF THE LORD *By Dennis A. Palma*

This joyous season brings to mind a recent story about personal forgiveness. It is a story about a neighborhood bully, and the secular way I dealt with it. This story takes place back in the middle seventies, back in my old neighborhood in Cherry Hill, New Jersey.

Back in those days, I was busy working two jobs! The reason I was working two jobs at that time, so that my wife at that time and my four children, could grow up enjoying life in a middle class neighborhood.

One day when I came home from working my day job, my wife at that time, was waiting for me at the front door with a serious look on her face. I said to her, what is wrong? She in turn said to me, our two boys had come home and complained about being harassed by a neighborhood bully. My first thought at the time was, what had happened, and were the boys ok?

I then proceeded to look for my boys, in order to find out what really happened. After a brief conversation with my two sons, I was convinced in my heart that there was a local bully trying to terrorize the neighborhood. Neither one of my sons knew where this bully lived. The only thing I could think of at that time was that this S.O.B., had taken advantage my children and that I was going to make it right for my family sake.

Back in those days, I would fight at the drop of a hat! I had back in the old days a sense of confidence in the art of self defense. My confidence came from, actively training at a boxing gym in South Philly.

I felt at that time, that I could hold my own in the art of self defense. Not that I was the best, but that I wasn't afraid to defend myself.

This guys whereabouts was easy to trace, there were other neighbors who had some problems with this guy also. As I proceeded towards this guys house, my adrenaline started to get pumped up! When I finally got to the guys house, I stopped and took a minute to compose myself, then proceeded to knock on his door.

After a minute or so, the bully finally came and answered the door.

As I stood face to face with this so called bully, I started to get a sense that I had a great advantage over this guy. First of all he was much younger, shorter, and about 25lbs. lighter. Do to the advantages I possessed, I felt confident that if I got in to a fight with this guy, that I would prevail.

I started to introduce myself and proceeded to explain my reasons for this visit. Although he was younger, shorter, and lighter, he made up for his physical disadvantages, with his bold and arrogant attitude.

As we started to exchange words back and forth, I started to get a sense that something was about to happen. All of a sudden from nowhere, his friend appeared. His friend was much older, heavier, and taller. He also made a point to let me know, that he was a black belt in karate. At that moment it all started to come together, it wasn't one bully I was up against, but two! Well there it was, I was now confronted with taking on two bullies at the same time. We then proceeded to get into a loud debate, exchanging back and forth all kinds of obscenities. After numerous verbal exchanges, I lost it and called them both out to the street, to settle this matter physically. The original bully backed down when he saw I meant business. This left only his enforcer, the karate expert and me.

We both then proceeded to go into the street, to engage in physical battle. As we centered off in the middle of the street, my hands went up and I got into position to rumble. All of a sudden he too got second thoughts when he knew I was serious about the fact, that I did not like bullies. At that point for what ever reason, he made a choice to back down also!

After approx. 25 years had past, my old rival surfaced again, guess where? In my present parish church in Collings Lakes, New Jersey!

When I first saw him at church, flashbacks of the past surfaced. He looked basically the same as I could remember, I could never forget that face.

He was now settled down and married with a wife and two children.

After seeing him for several months at church, I realized that the anger was still very present inside of me. While in Church one Sunday morning, the Spirit came upon me and touched my heart. The voice of the Spirit in my head said that it was a sin to not forgive this man. The Lord says in

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you

I then started to pray for forgiveness for this matter! All of a sudden I felt a sense of unbelievable joy and forgiveness for this man. I then prayed for the courage and strength to share this forgiveness with this man.

The Holy Spirit took over from that point and after church I got the opportunity to make peace with this man after all those years.

I told him that I was very sorry for the way I acted back in the old days. He in turn told me he also was sincerely sorry for the way he acted also.

At this time you must be saying to yourself, what does this story have to do with the birth of Christ? Well let me tell you, it has a lot to do with Christ birth. The main reasons that the Father sent His only begotten Son down here was, for the forgiveness of sin for all mankind. **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16.** Jesus teaches us how to live our

lives, abiding in the Fathers will. All throughout His entire life, Jesus Christ exemplified God's will in every area of His life. Leaving for all of us, the perfect antidote from spiritual darkness and eternal damnation.

The reason why forgiveness means so much around Christmas time is because it is a real reminder of the unending forgiveness the Lord offers all of us. It was at the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ, that a new way of life was born. But it was not until the Death of our Savior on the cross that the price of forgiveness for our sins was paid. There was no other way for the Father to forgive our sins, but through the sacrifice of the shed blood of His perfect Son Jesus Christ. He paid for all our sins, past present and future. There could never have been Eternal Salvation, without the forgiveness of sins. In **Acts 10:43 The Lord says: All the prophets testify about Him that everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins**

So my friends in Christ remember this Christmas, that the birth of Christ is all about love, forgiveness, and hope for all who truly believe in Him! Let us pray: Heavenly Father we thank You, we praise You, and we bless You, for always being our Abba Father. Thank You Father for sending Your one and only Son Jesus into this world to save us from eternal damnation. Thank You Father for your free gift of Eternal Salvation through Christ. Thank You again Father, for the greatest Christmas gift of all this holiday season. That gift is, Your unending grace, love, joy, peace, and mercy found only through Your Son and our Savior Jesus Christ.....Amen.

HOPE FOR TOMORROW FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER KING OF KINGS

Psalms 45:6 A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.

From His very birth Christ was recognized as King. Something about Him inspired allegiance, loyalty and homage. Wise men brought Him gifts. Shepherds fell down and worshiped Him. Herod, realizing that there is never room for two thrones in one kingdom, sought His life.

As Jesus began His ministry, His claims upon people lives were total and absolute. He allowed no divided loyalty. He demanded and received complete adoration and devotion. Mature men and women left their businesses and gave themselves in complete obedience to Him. Many of them gave their lives, pouring out the last full measure of devotion.

His words caused even His most avowed enemies to say, **“No man ever spoke like this man!”(John7:46)**. And yet He was more than a poet, more than a statesman, more than a physician. We cannot understand Christ until we understand that He was the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Like

Thomas, our only response must be to bow down and confess, **“My Lord and my God!”** (John 20:28).....Billy Graham

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

From the Spiritual Connection 2004

May this season be a joyous and blessed one, for you and your entire family.

May this season be one of thanking the Lord always, for all the freedom and abundance of goods that we have in this country.

May we all pray this seasons for the safety and return of our troops in harms way at this time, who are protecting our freedoms !

May we all draw near to the poor and needy this season, with Gods love and open arms , considering their needs first over ours.

May we give thanks and praise always to Our Lord Jesus Christ for His Birth, Death, and Resurrection.

SPIRITUAL CLICHÉ FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

Proverbs 16:20 **Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers, and blessed is he who trust in the Lord.**

SPECIAL PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK

Anne Palma Michael Monforto Anthony Palma Jr Arlene Santarpio
Sal Talamo Jennifer Myers John Sotile Janet Neil Harry Neil Roland

**TO CONTACT THE MINISTRY OFFICE FOR PRAYER REQUEST,
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Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!
