



When Christmas is Hard

By Trillia Newbell

www.trillianewbell.com

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I never know exactly when it's going to hit me, but when it does, it seems to come on like daggers piercing my heart. The celebrations during the holidays can be festive and exciting, but in the back of my mind I know that there are people missing. With every picture shared on social media about the fun and delight of family, I am given a reminder that two special members of my extended family are gone. Almost every holiday is a reminder to me that someone is missing. This, I know, isn't isolated to me. Many of you have lost someone or, if you haven't lost someone, your family is so steeped in conflict that it feels like you might as well have lost someone. Or, maybe the holiday season serves as a spotlight on financial struggles, marital strife, wayward or prodigal children...the list of potential difficulties goes on and on.

This Advent season, remember that Jesus entered into your pain the moment he went from being seated at the right hand of the Father to the womb of a woman. The moment Jesus chose to become Immanuel—God with us—He began fulfilling the words of Hebrews:

"Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb 4:14-16)

Real Pain

Grief and sorrow are the shadows that follow many of us around during the holidays. But there's often something about the season that makes you and I think that we must put on a happy face and hide the pain we feel in our hearts. We don't have to. The pain is real. The sorrow is real. Trials are hard to endure at times. God never once promised the Christian life would be without trials. On the contrary, as it has been said

before, all one needs to do is live long enough and surely trials will arrive. So there is no date on the calendar that can take away the sadness and difficulties that we often face in life. No magic pill. No man-made celebration.

But God...

God can ease our pain and sorrow. God can give us peace. God can remind us of the joys of this life even in the midst of great sorrows. God also sent His Son who reminds us that we don't suffer alone. Thankfully we have a Savior who relates to our suffering. Jesus is aware of and acquainted with the grief of man. He is acquainted with my grief and your grief. The God-Man endured trials and temptation but is without sin ([Hebrews 4:15](#)). He faced agony to the point that his sweat became like drops of blood ([Luke 22:44](#)). In his final moments on the cross, Mark records him saying, "'Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?' which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" ([Mark 15:34](#)).

His pain and suffering were for a purpose — the redemption of the world. He endured great pain and wrath, which I can only begin to imagine, on my behalf.

Hope that won't put us to shame

However, paradoxical it may seem, you and I can rejoice in suffering because we have a living hope. This season, I know that my hope, the boy in the manger, will bring me to an eternal glory. I will one day rise and be with Christ *forever*. I can rejoice in suffering today because I know that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put me to shame, because God's love has been poured into my heart through the Holy Spirit who has been given to me ([Romans 5:3-5](#)).

We know Jesus is coming again, and as promised will one day wipe every tear away ([Rev. 21: 4](#)). The truth of these words and our future hope are some of the greatest comforts to us this holiday season. We may not be able to rejoice and celebrate with a fairytale happiness—but we can have *real* joy. This joy comes from knowing that we await something so much greater than any earthly celebration.



THE "BEHOLD" GATHERINGS
WEDNESDAY EVENINGS IN DECEMBER
6-7pm
Music, Prayer & Reflection

Special Worship Leaders:
 12/1 Cody & Dianne Stinnett
 12/8 Josh Billingsley
 12/15 The Nortons

These gatherings are family friendly. But there will be Nursery and Childcare attendants downstairs if needed.

THE ANGEL TREE PROJECT IS UNDERWAY!

All tags must be filled
 and returned to the
 RCC Building by
 December 12th



We have hung over 180 Angel Tree Tags on this year's tree in our entryway. The needs are great.



Christmas... Cookies... Caring

Join the ladies as we gather to celebrate the Christmas Season, exchange cookies & love on others! Bring 2 dozen cookies to share (homemade or store bought)



RCC 5th Annual Women's Retreat

2022 Theme
HOPE

Feb 25 & 26

Men's Bible Study

Thursdays @7PM

Discussion: Sunday Sermon Series "Christ the Lord"

Natalie Anne Shepherd

Born 11/16/21
to Dalton & Julie Anne
Congratulations!

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord

YOUTH GROUP SUNDAYS

5:00 - 6:30 Middle School
 6:00 - 7:30 High School

Christmas Party Dec 12, 5-7pm
@ the Fitness Center

TO CONTACT PASTOR JASON
 (309)331-0200 (talk/text)
 jasontriplett99@gmail.com

TO SUBMIT NEWS CONTACT
 Mindy Crum (217)473-3473
 Or Email to RushvilleCC@gmail.com

Prayers & Praises

Updated: 12/1/2021

Leaders of our country & military

Unity in Schuyler County

Family of Ron Payne

Family of Peg Davis

Family of Rick Ashcraft

Thelma is Post Chemo & everything is looking good!

Emma Triplett joined Air National Guard

Josh Triplett - Praise

Judy Jones recovery from fall

Sara Barrientos Praise for Job!

Roy Lung - ERCP

Alice Johnson health

Jill Smith Goodin

Kash Chezney - father

Festival of Trees

Brandon Roberts - housing

Holiday Season can bring on loneliness

Twin girls & family of Michael and Megan Barton, Pioneer Bible Translators

Guigi Johnson (Broken Hip/Surgery)

Nathan Ralston

Garrett Collins - Cancer

Janet Detrick - Cancer

Kailey Orwig - stationed at Ft. Campbell, TN

Abigail Norton - is HOME!

NOVEMBER OFFERINGS:

Nov 7 - \$ 2843.39
Nov 14 - \$ 1592.89
Nov 21 - \$ 2000.14
Nov 28 - \$ 1801.89

OCC SHOEBOXES - \$ 347.50
ANGEL TREE - \$ 200.00

Prayer Requests can be submitted and updated through the online Prayer card. Find it at rushvillechurchofchrist.com

