

A Christmas Journey

December 12 & 13, 2009

Intro:

There are certain things in life that we just can't accept and we *shouldn't*. Many of those are fairly obvious. There are also things (and people) we have a hard time accepting, but we know we *should* accept them.

This character, Matt, had **something** in his life that he just couldn't accept. The loss of his son *Donnie* was a harsh reality that he didn't want to face, but denial proved pointless - there was no escape. Life deals out some very *bad blows* that seem *particularly sad* at Christmastime.

Matt also had **someone** in his life that he couldn't accept. He knew that his young adopted boy *Will* deserved his love. But he couldn't find the strength to accept him.

1. I wonder if you have **something in your life that you have had a hard time accepting.**

- Maybe it is a **loss** that comes up fresh every year at this time. Or maybe it's your financial situation or a physical limitation.

But maybe the thing you can't accept is **responsibility**. You've a hard time *taking responsibility* to lead spiritually at home or to take initiative at work. Maybe you have not been able to stop excusing your laziness, or rationalizing your lust with lies.

2. Or maybe for you it is not *something* but **someone you can't accept but know you should**. They need your acceptance, approval or forgiveness but you've had nothing to offer them yet. You haven't found the power.

- **It is probably a relative, but it may be yourself.**

Maybe the person you won't accept is yourself. You're imprisoned in self-destructive bondage. You can't forgive yourself. You haven't been able to let the past pass.

T - So, this character, Matt had *something* he couldn't accept and *someone* he couldn't accept. But the play doesn't leave us hanging...

3. ...it reveals the **solution** *we experience when we see Christmas for what it is.*

Matt had a chance to *go back and see the first Christmas*, the birth of Christ. And what he saw led him to *accept Jesus Christ for who he claimed to be* - the one who gives *Christmas* meaning, the one who gives *all of life* meaning.

- **Accepting Christ brings us into God's family and empowers us to accept both the things and the people we have a hard time accepting.**

This program was written to take you back so you can see Christmas for what it is: the gift of God that brings us into a *relationship* with him. It is like the angel said in the play: *Christmas is the gift of the Savior. To all who believe, it is the hope and promise of being with God.*

"To all who believe" reminds me of [John 1:12 - To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.](#) *Accepting Jesus for who he is, receiving him, brings us into relationship with God as his sons and daughters!* I like the part in the play where the guy realizes that God's gift of his Son is the way we are *adopted* as sons into God's forever family.

[Gal 4:4,5 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that he might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.](#) *When the time was ripe, God intervened. He stepped into our situation with a solution!* These verses explain the purpose of Christmas: **God sent Jesus to redeem us.** That is: *to pay the price of sin, to*

set us free from bondage, to bring us back to God. From the vantage point of God's forever family, we find it a whole lot easier to accept what we need to accept in life.

Maybe this Christmas *you need to accept something* that you've had a hard time accepting. Maybe it's a fact that you've tried to avoid. Or maybe it's a person, someone you need to love but you've been withholding. The key is accepting Christ. *I've got a story of a friend who realized this.*

4. His story, like the drama, shows the value of God's Christmas gift of Jesus. About 10 years ago, when I was serving in the coastal hills near San Diego, this guy came into my office and said, *"I'd like you to introduce me to my wife's God."* What an *interesting way to open an appointment!*

I listened to his story. He had been pumping money into his business to make it go, but the company didn't fly. Instead, it went down and his money went with it. He had *no separation* between his business accounts and his personal finances so he eventually lost his house. *(If any business is worth this level of risk, it would've been his, for he was an avocado broker. Down there, growers referred to the hass avocado as black gold. I still do.)*

Anyway, he said this: *I know the house meant a lot more to my wife than it does to me. I find my identity at work, she finds it in our home - and now it's gone. There is no natural reason she'd accept this situation; we're financially ruined. And there is no natural explanation for the way she accepts me; I'm the one who put us at risk. It was my mistake that caused all this pain. The only explanation is supernatural, spiritual. I want to accept this Jesus that empowers her to accept what I cannot.*

That day the man accepted Jesus Christ and was born again into the family of God. As he was adopted into the family, he received all the rights of a son:

Access: God allows his children to come in at any time.

Affection: God shows his children warmth.

An inheritance: God's children are heirs of everything.

Provision: God meets his children's needs.

Significance: God's children bear the family name.

Protection: God cares for his children.

Image: God's children grow to look like their Father.

Maybe your family situation doesn't provide all of this. You can receive adoption into God's forever family. If you already have, I've got to ask you if you're enjoying these family privileges. They are yours as a child of God. So,

•**What is the next step in your journey?** You can be adopted in by accepting Christ. This will empower you to accept both the things and the people you have a hard time accepting. **Prayer.**