

He spent only 8 years in prison in California before they released him. And the public wouldn't even have known that he was loose again if it hadn't been for some friends of the victim who protested the injustice of it all.

Juries deliberate for hours, even weeks, and sometimes we wonder how in the world they reached the verdict that they did.

Or how about the automobile accident in which a father and 3 children were killed? A woman was driving way over the speed limit. She ran a red light and crashed broadside into their car, killing the father and his 3 children instantly. But the woman driving above the speed limit, running the red light, wasn't even hurt. Somehow that doesn't seem fair, does it? There is so much in this world that doesn't seem fair.

What would it be like if we who are a part of the church would wrap up a little gift called "justice" and bring it to the manger of Christ? What if the church said, "Lord, we don't care what else the world may do, but we, as your people, will be fair with one another. We promise not to cheat. We promise to be fair in our business dealings. We promise that we will not lie to our customers. We'll always be honest in the things we say. We'll always be fair and just in the things we do. We promise to be fair with people who have a different color of skin. We'll never talk unjustly about them. We won't gossip, we won't complain, we'll not argue or fight with one another. We'll always be fair!" What would it be like if God's people would do that? What if we wrap up the gift of justice, and bring it to Jesus?

2. Love Mercy .

God told Micah "to love mercy, to love kindness." The Bible says, "Love is patient and it is kind" (1 Corinthians 13:). It is hard to find kindness today. So many people are unkind.

Perhaps you have heard about the woman who never swore, but caused everyone around her to swear. We have all known people like that.

Have you ever been treated unkindly? Have you ever had that sinking feeling inside, when you feel that people don't really care about you and that you are being rejected by them?

Think about the lepers in N.T. times. Wherever they went, they had to announce their coming by shouting "Unclean, unclean!" How they must have felt when people looked at them, turned and ran away from them, afraid to touch them, not wanting to be in their presence. They were not even welcome in their own homes, or among their family members.

Yet, when they came to Jesus, He didn't turn and run. He reached out and touched them and healed them! He treated them with kindness, and the result was healing.

What about the woman that Jesus met at Jacob's well? How many husbands had she had? Was it 5? And the man she was living with now was not her husband. She was viewed by the entire community as immoral. When she walked down the street they must have snickered and hurled insulting remarks. They must have been so unkind that she was even afraid to come to the well in the morning or in the evening when everyone else came. Instead, she came in the heat of noontime to draw her water. And it was then that she found Jesus. What if Jesus had been unkind? What if Jesus had said, "I want nothing to do with you, you immoral woman?"

But He didn't. Rather, He spoke to her in such a way that she ran back to Sychar and told the people to come and meet a man who had told her everything she had ever done, a man who had treated her with kindness.

Kindness is a good gift to bring at Christmas time. Would you make a covenant with me this Christmas and into the New Year to give the gift of kindness? Can we promise that we will try to be kinder to one another and that we will reflect the true

spirit of Christ and show the world that He has made a difference and a change in our lives? The gift of kindness would be a wonderful gift to bring to Jesus at Christmas time.

3. Walk Humbly .

The Lord told Micah that He wanted one more gift - "walk humbly with our God." Jesus came into a world not greatly impressed with humility. He came into a world influenced by Greek culture and art. People were arrogant and proud. They thought that if you were important you would have a number of slaves and live among the aristocracy. You would wear lots of jewelry and flash that among the common people.

He came into a world greatly impressed with "Power." Roman officers rode on prancing stallions, with shining armor and plumes in their helmets swords and shields in place giving orders. And people quickly responding to their orders.

Into that kind of world Jesus came, riding not a prancing stallion but seated upon the foal of a donkey. He came with no great possessions, no fancy jewels, no material wealth, and the world was unimpressed! It rejected Him. It mocked Him, and it crucified Him!

Almost 2,000 years have passed since then. Are we any different than the Greeks and the Romans? Now we are impressed with brand names. We still want to wear just the right clothes – be in fashion drive the right automobile and live in the right neighborhood.

Yet, to Micah, the Lord said, "Walk humbly with thy God."

Conclusion

These are three amazing Christmas gifts. Yet, amazingly, we don't have to have money to give them. We don't have to have talent to give them. Everyone here can give them. We can bring them, neatly wrapped, and place them at the feet of Jesus.

May I suggest that when we do, it may very well be the best Christmas that we have ever had.

Give These to Jesus!

Overcoming Holiday Stress

The Christmas season should bring us joy and warm our souls, but more often than not, it brings heartburn and stress, headache and depression. Holiday stress will make this most wonderful time of year a miserable mess if you let it. Christmas holds the potential to fulfill and renew. It brings people together. It makes us focus on Christian values. Christmas is a time for family traditions and rituals. These rituals give us a sense of continuity and stability. They allow us a way to express our love for one another. Christmas is a time to reflect on the greatest gift of all time - the gift of salvation.

The stresses that plague people this time of year are rooted in three basic sources: **TIME** (getting everything done), **MONEY** (paying for it), and **EMOTIONS** (painful memories that resurface and family conflicts.)

We could all make a ten-page list of things that can go wrong at Christmas. The point is that things will go wrong. They always have and they always will whether it's Christmas or not. What makes all the difference in the world is whether you let it affect you or not.

Holiday Stress has been around a long time, even at the first Christmas. Here are some factors that added to the stress. *Angels started showing up and scaring the daylights out of people. Mary is pregnant with Jesus out of wedlock. Joseph wants to break off the engagement with Mary. It's census and tax time. Ever been on the road with a pregnant woman? Enough said. There was a delivery in the livery. Several unexpected guests arrived (shepherds). Things got pretty hectic in the lives of Joseph and Mary when Jesus showed up.*

But with a little divine help they endured the hardships and went on with life.

Here is a prescription for overcoming **Holiday Stress**:

1. *Pray, pray, and pray some more.* We all need divine help, and the best way to get it is to ask through prayer. The Bible tells us that we have not because we ask not. So ASK!
2. *Set priorities.* Decide what's important and what's not. Having a spotless manger isn't nearly as important as being hospitable and sharing the joy of Christmas with others.
3. *Understand that something will go wrong, but it's all right.* It's part of the Christmas experience.
4. *Use common sense and plan ahead.* Buy your gifts early and plan your meals so your husband doesn't need to make a half dozen last minute trips to the store. Book your reservations well in advance and pad your travel time with extra days on both ends of the trip. Planning in advance will save you much grief.
5. *Simplify your life.* Ask yourself, "Is this really necessary? What difference will it make in the eternal scheme of things?"
6. *Celebrate Christmas in ways that are personally meaningful.*
7. *When trouble comes your way this Holiday Season, and it will, take the high road.* Give the problem to God in prayer and leave it there. Don't take it with you when you say 'Amen.'

Merry Christmas!

Bro. Allan ☺

Opportunities For Service

Living out Your Spiritual Commitment . . . and Fulfilling Christ's Divine Plan

Sunday, December 25, 2016

Choir Rehearsal..... 9:00 am

No Sunday School

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: ? ? ? ?, Ken Nice,

 Fred Kerns, Don Sharp

Alternate: Isaac Waters

No Evening Worship.....

Monday, December 26

Office will be closed.

Wednesday, December 28

PLEASE NOTE:

There will be no Wednesday evening services this week.

Sunday, January 1, 2017

Choir Rehearsal..... 9:00 am

Sunday School 9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: Larry McKahan, Isaac Waters, Ken Kirkpatrick, Bill Schottel

Alternate: Ken Nice

No Evening Worship.....

Wednesday, January 3

Youth Study..... 6:30 pm

Prayer / Bible Study6:30 pm

Adult Choir 7:30 pm

Thursday, January 4

G Team.....6:30 pm

Up-Coming Events.....

December 25 — Christmas

— Collect for Food Pantry

— No Diversicare

December 26-January2 — Pastor Allan and Ellen will be on vacation.

January 1, 2017 — Happy New Year !

— Guest speaker—Rev. Randy Harr

January 2 — Office will be closed

GROW Team

Commit to **GROW!** Everyone make a contact! Invite someone to Bible Study and Worship this week. ☺

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Sunday Nights

We will not meet tonight or for the next two weeks because Christmas and New Year's Day.

Wednesday Night Prayer and Bible Study

We will not meet Wednesday at 6:30 pm. Hope to see you next year!

Christmas Love Gift for Matt and Karissa Long

Matt and Karissa Long are leaving January 18, 2017 for Papua, New Guinea. Our church family has decided to give them a Christmas love offering. Please pray about how the Lord would have you give.

2016 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering®

Our church-wide goal is \$1,500.00. Please pray about what you should give. So far we have received \$860.00.

Christmas Card Boxes Are in the Hallway

Thanks for using the card box this year. Don't forget to contribute the postage you save to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Be sure to pick up cards addressed to you or your family.

Christmas Morning Schedule

We did not have Sunday School today on Christmas Morning. Next week we will resume our regular schedule, Sunday School at 9:15 am and Morning Worship, 10:30 am.

Food Pantry Collection

Our collection for Patee Park Food Pantry will be today. You may place your grocery items in the basket in the hallway. Pam will be collecting at the door with Bro. Allan today after morning worship. Thank you for your willingness to give.

For the Record-

Attendance: December 11, 2016

Sunday School.....	55
Visitors.....	5
Total.....	60
Contacts Made.....	6
Morning Worship.....	57
Children's Worship.....	29
Sunday Night	N/A
Wednesday Night	17

Financial Record:

Weekly Budget	\$ 2,040.52
Offering Received ...	\$ 5,497.00
Lottie Moon...	\$ 860.00
Love Offering for Longs	\$ 620.00

Offering Received by Mail:

Eric and Shelly Thompson

December Counting Team:

Don Beavers and Jordan Lane

December Van Driver:

Mike Green

Remember to call 232-3747
before 8 am if you need a ride.

December Member Birthdays:

03 ... Brent Fortune
08 ... Madeline Swink
09 ... Allison Adkinson
11 ... George Ferbert
15 ... George Burgess
16 ... Addison Leichti
16 ... Doris Richardson
19 ... Jessica Kirkpatrick
20 ... Leona Reynolds
20 ... Brenda Burgess

23 ... Joseph Coats

December Anniversaries

Bill and Alva Lou Schottel
December 22, 1962

Prayer Requests ...

The Family of Bobby Griswold
The Family of Audrey Dugan
Dorothy Post—surgery recovery
Penny Sherlock—surgery recovery
Tim Izer during the holidays
Gary & Peggy Fewins and Byron
George Ferbert and Family—strength
Nellie Reynolds—recovery at home
Troy Griswold—cancer
David Beavers—recovery
Larry Danner—cancer treatment
Cynthia Burdick—cancer treatment
Jim Winans at home
Karissa and Matt Long and family
Betty Campbell—healing
Pat Puckett—eyes, healing
Marcia and Don Hart—future plans
Lisa Bowers—Jack and Flo's daughter
LoLeta Middleton—strength
Ellen Blanton and Lois Ulmer—
Elvera's daughter & daughter-in-law
Stella Davis and Linda Rails—Doris
Richardson's sisters
Madeline Swink Sue Higgins
Kathryn Beavers Ann Riddle
Louanne Laurence Keon McKahan
Jozy Winans Leona Reynolds
Kevin Duty Kenny Duty
Sue Higgins Buddy Means
Bill Haskins Debbie Sands
Brenda Burgess Judy Anderson
Carolyn Houts Roscoe Lane
Missionaries Don and Diane Combs
Nickolay Nazaruk, Peski 2 Church
David and Deborah Grace
Jeanette Swackhamer—Beja People
Our Nation and Leaders
Our Military Service people
Today's Prayer Requests ...

Our Nation and our Leaders ...

Five More New Families...
