

I believe it was Jesus who said:

"... for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Luke 6:38 (NRSV)

Reflecting on all the Christmas' experienced with my parents and brothers, later with my new bride, then our children, and finally our grandchildren always awakens wonderful memories. The delight that must have been in my eyes when I opened my first Tonka Toy, a bow and arrow set, and the year I found my first guitar under the Christmas tree is relived through them multiple times.

The laughter, expressions of joy, and wanting to rush away from the family Christmas gathering to have fun with the long awaited gift linger in my memories. Anticipation created a burning desire and ultimately, great joy, when the wrapping paper was torn away. Great for me then, and yet so wonderful as the years have progressed.

Delight in eyes of children blessed to be in a country, culture, or family capable of and driven to give gifts is a Godsend. When the child receives a much desired and prized toy conceived in his or her nightly dreams, you see their eyes sparkle and hear their laughter. Their exuberance brings joy to you, and you are just the giver.

When have you experienced a special time you gave a highly desired gift or offered to help a brother or sister in need? Once you remember the giving event, try to recall the blessings and positive feelings you experienced following the action. Circumstances dictate the reaction of each person, and more often than not the giver or helper in the scenario is the most delighted.

The "I believe it was Jesus who said" series ends with this Talk. Each previous posting was about the powerful words of Jesus the Christ. The intent was to give some insights into how doing what Jesus asks of us makes us better. Jesus taught that we should love others and share our time and attention without expecting anything in return. Following the ideas and concepts of Jesus creates multiple situations for unimaginable blessings in return for our expressions of love.

Through giving, you and I receive and share blessings the instant the gift is exchanged. With little exception the spiritual elevation is shared with other people we know and love. Dispersing joy at any level creates a circle of caring and sharing that expands from our inner being like ripples surrounding a stone tossed into the water.

So here is what makes me proud to be a collective one with all of you throughout the year and especially during Christmas. The Spirit of Christmas is more than a season. It provides a way of living in gratitude for God's loving presence in our lives. The season opens our minds and hearts, our eyes and ears to see and give thanks for the good in the Now!

Beacon House, Helping Hands, Pantry and other ways you, the Church, reach out to the community brings Joy to many hearts. For all the great giving and helping expressions of love you contribute and deliver, I say "THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!! THANK YOU!!"

Merry Christmas one and all!! Ted