

"LIFE THROUGH THE LENS"



UNEXPECTED GIFTS

Who would ever expect to see oversized Christmas presents hanging in a gum tree on a main street? As we stood on the footpath with an expectant crowd, waiting for the Christmas Parade, a young, excited voice suddenly cried, "Look!" Many eyes followed the pointing finger. Many questions followed; "How did they get them there?" "I wonder if there is anything in them?" "How can we get them down?" "Who are they for?" and the all-familiar, "I want the big one!"

Sadly, many would not have seen that unique display of presents hung in an Aussie gum tree. Many rushed on by, chatting to friends, others with eyes searching further along the path for family or friends or a "good" viewing spot. Even when someone tried to draw their attention to the display, they were too focused elsewhere to hear or take notice and missed something unique.

Who would ever expect to see God's love demonstrated through the birth of his loved son born in a manger in a stable? An unexpected gift, not wrapped in colourful paper and bright ribbons, but in strips of cloth and straw. This gift comes with the message, "I love all people, and my son brings with him the gift of peace. Peace between everyone who accepts my offer And peace between all people who in faith believe what I offer."

Christmas is full of surprises, and that is part of its attraction. The question, the wondering what is in there? The complete and intended joy only happens when the gift is opened and accepted.

The gift of God's special love that says to everyone, "My heart overflows with love for you. I know you have some pretty crummy stuff in your life. I see the pain and hurt you have caused other people. I know you have done some pretty nasty things to yourself that I never intended you to do to mess up your life. Trust me; my love comes to you through my gift of baby Jesus. Even though I know one day this Jesus will die paying for your wrongs, all that is forgotten and will never be held against you. ***"Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea."* Micah 7:18-19**

So, as we head toward Christmas, stop rushing along searching for something you hope will bring happiness. Stop, unpack, and accept God's unique gift of love, which keeps giving and bringing a new life with joy year after year. Accept his parcel of love through Jesus with both hands and who knows what God in love might have added just for you.

God bless,

Kevin.