

Waiting for the Ultimate Gift

11/28/21

Brothers & Sisters,

Can someone please tell me how we got to the first Sunday of Advent? I am simply not ready to be here with all of the activity that seems to come with this season. So much to prepare and get ready for.

This morning I was reflecting about Advent seasons of my childhood and one particular Advent season stands out among all the others. I was about seven years old and my sister Cheryl, was about nine. It was before our younger sister Tammie was born and Cheryl and I were thick-as-thieves' sisters. We shared a bedroom and talked every night after bedtime about all the things that sisters talk about (horses, school, friends etc.) until we fell asleep. We lived a beautiful *free-range* life and even though our family was of modest means, Cheryl and I never felt like we needed anything. During this time in my life, one of our favorite things to do was save the money we earned from helping neighbors or changing irrigation pipe and buy 45 rpm records to play on an old secondhand blue and white Crosley portable record player that Mom had given us. We LOVED listening to music on that old thing, but the summer before this memorable Advent, our old record player's needle wore out, (man, I am really dating myself here, aren't I?). I recall Mom asking us sometime around Thanksgiving what we might like for a Christmas gift. We were pretty simple kids and as I said, lived a wonderful life. Even though we didn't have a lot of *things*, we didn't have very many wants either, so after much bedtime discussion, we decided that the best gift ever would be a new needle for our old record player. I remember Mom giving us a sweet smile when we told her and not really saying too much about the requested desire and that was the end of that.

I recall that being a particularly chilly winter and Dad working on some project in the basement. Dad told us he was building new nesting boxes for the chickens. As a kid on a farm, I didn't think anything about it, and Dad was always pretty fussy with his projects, so it didn't seem too strange to me that he was taking his time and doing such a good job.

As advent continued, Cheryl and I spent our bedtime chats wondering, like most kids do before Christmas, if Mom and Dad would actually give us the gift that we had hoped for. We helped Mom get everything ready for Christmas and did our own Christmas preparations making simple gifts for one another and our parents. It seemed like such a long time until Christmas that year. The waiting was hard, and I think perhaps it was because we anticipated (hoped for) a gift that would bring us so much joy.

When Christmas morning finally arrived and we went downstairs, there next to the Christmas tree were the 'nesting boxes' Dad had been working on in the basement. We were confused, but next to the 'nesting boxes' sat a very large package. When Cheryl and I unwrapped the

package, we found a brand new record player with speakers that fit perfectly on the beautiful stand that Dad had so carefully made and disguised as nesting boxes. We were overwhelmed at the generosity of this incredible gift that our parents had given us.

Remembering this childhood Advent season makes me think about how in our naiveté during advent while we are waiting and preparing for what we think is *the ultimate* gift at Christmas time, perhaps we really are preparing and waiting for **so much more than we can even imagine!** I wonder if our hearts and minds are really able to fully comprehend the gift we are preparing for. I am going to try to keep that in mind as I make my preparations this year. I want to savor the time in preparing and waiting for the truly ultimate gift-Christ!

Wish you all a beautiful beginning to this special season of preparing and waiting.

In Christ+

Lorrie