

## Christmas Expectancy

There is something about the Christmas Season that evokes "*pathos*." It may be a sense of nostalgia, an anticipation of a surprise, or a tinge of sadness; but Christmas, for most of us, evokes emotion.

I believe the feeling that best captures the very first Christmas is **expectancy**. The Sovereign Eternal Creator God of the Universe came to us in person. All of creation and history was pregnant with expectancy. The wonder of wonders, the glorious, and historic and cosmos-changing reality occurred on that first Christmas day.

The residual sound of Christmas expectancy still reverberates today. What about us? Do we live with a sense of Christmas expectancy? Do we live with an expectant spirit; believing that the God who came in Jesus Christ is engaged in our everyday lives? Do we live with expectancy that the gospel of the Christ, who came, went to the Cross and rose again for our salvation, and will redeem our sorrows, is true?

Why do many Christians seemingly not live with such expectancy? Perhaps it is because we have confused "expectancy" with "expectations." The Bible does not promise the Christ-follower that we will receive all that we expect. Sometimes our expectations; of ourselves, of others and even of God, are our veiled attempt at controlling our lives. That's why when faced with disappointments many of us become anxious, angry and dispirited.

Now then, think again; do we live our life with a spirit of expectancy or a tyranny of expectations? Sadly, many of us live our lives like we celebrate Christmas. We are driven by multiple expectations; one more party, one more gift to purchase; one more detail to check off a list. Indeed, we may accomplish all the expectations; but we are left with a spirit void of joy. Life becomes reduced to a very long list of expectations.

Please do not misunderstand me. There is nothing wrong with fulfilling expectations; responsible living is a vital part of a faithful Christian life. Living with child-like expectancy should not become a rationale for dismissing our responsibilities.

The concern is that the insatiable completion of one expectation after another, or living with the constant regret of failed expectations, can erode a spirit of expectancy. If we are not careful, we can cease living "life that is truly life" and settle for going through the motions of living. If we are not spiritually vigilant, we can lose a sense that we are a part of the God's glorious drama. We can become so busy living up to expectations that we are no longer living with expectancy.

A children's Christmas book called "The Song of the Stars" by Sally Lloyd-Jones captures the spirit of Christmas expectancy. Below is the opening stanza from the book.

The world was about to change forever and it almost went by unnoticed.  
But the leaves, that night, rustled with rumor.  
News rang out across the open fields.  
A song drifted over the hills.  
The wind whispered it softly in the Sycamore trees,  
that waved their moonlit branches to the sky.  
A barn owl took flight.  
Woodland creatures stirred.  
It's Time! It's Time!

This is the spirit of Christmas expectancy. All of creation breathed with the anticipation that the Creator was about to enter His world. And, "in the fullness of time God sent his Son" ... (Gal.4:4)

The promise for all who trust in Christ is that we can live and breathe with this air of expectancy. The God, who entered the world on that first Christmas day, is the same God who is intimately engaged in our lives. Through faith in Christ, we have a relationship with the God of the Universe, whose eternal drama was climaxed when a tiny baby was born on Christmas Day.

His eternal story continues to unfold and we are participants. Through faith and obedience to Christ, our routine life is the background of the fulfillment of God's Sovereign purposes. Do we believe in our spirit that the God who came in person on the first Christmas day is working in our lives? This is the gospel truth of Christmas. This Christmas, whether you are nostalgic, joyful or sad, recapture *Christmas -expectancy*. It's time! It's time!