

The Lakeside



Message in a bottle

Verse of the day for Monday December 29, 2025 - Ezekial 34: 12

12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered flock when he is with them, so will I look after my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered on a day of clouds and darkness.

Read Ezekial 34 for meditation and inspiration.



Dear Lakesiders and Friends,

Every Christmas, the parents of three grown children divided their holiday celebrations among the three different families. But with the difficulties involved in holiday preparation and extensive travel, sometimes they were tempted to throw up their hands and say, "It's too much! It's just not worth the effort." Whenever either of the parents got that feeling of exasperation, they would give the other a wink and say, "Long walk, dear, long walk," and laugh as they continued their holiday plans.

You see, "Long walk" was a code phrase and comes from a story that I have shared with you at other times. In this case they began using it after hearing an old story about a young native boy who gave his missionary teacher an exquisite seashell as a Christmas gift. The boy had to walk miles to a particular bay which was the only place where such shells existed. "How wonderful of you to have traveled so far for this present," the teacher said. The boy's eyes lit up as he replied, "Long walk is part of the gift." For the missionary teacher, this was a gift of infinite value that no other could ever surpass.

John's powerful description of the gift of the Incarnation Event is unsurpassed. It is the gift of the infinite God who comes to us and reveals Himself to us in the Person of a tiny, vulnerable human Child. "In Him was life and the life was the Light of men" (Jn. 1:4). John is telling us that in and through the Lord Jesus, God has made it possible for us to experience His Power and Love in the depths of our existence so that we may have fullness of life. But did you notice the unexpected turn John makes in the middle of his description? Turning from this scheme of grace and light and life, John suddenly says, "To His own, He came, yet His own did not accept Him"

(Jn. 1:11). Then just as unexpectedly, John returns once again to the theme of Grace, saying, "The word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we have seen His glory. The glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love" (Jn. 1:14). John is emphasizing the miracle of the persistence of God's Grace. Despite the rejection, He keeps coming; He keeps returning. He keeps trying to break through to offer us His love despite the resistance. And, as John says, to those who finally say "Yes," -- those who receive Him -- "He empowers to become the children of God" (Jn. 1:12). No more beautiful or important Christmas story has ever been written.

We heard the story once again last Wednesday during our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and we now bask in the glory of it.

"Glory We Have Heard on High",

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Roger".

Roger