

Merry Christmas

I often think of one Christmas carol in particular this time of year. Here is how the first verse goes:

*Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King!
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing.*

There are other verses to the song, of course but this is the one I remember and sing the most as I go through the Christmas Season. There are a lot of things to be joyful about in our lives. Though everything is not exactly the way we would want it, we are blessed in many ways. Recently I was thinking about my ventures to the Philippines and working with a ministry called Hope for the Nations. Our church supports Dave and Liz Wicks who oversee a feeding and health program for the very poor of Agdao, a rundown section of a city called Davao. I took a lot of pictures when I was there and when my computer goes into sleep mode, they pop up. There I am with the little ones in my arms or running around playing hide and seek or serving a hot bowl of rice with a few vegetables and chicken. Over and over I am reminded of how blessed I am and how I have no real reason to complain.

But for me, real joy does not just come from how fortunate I am or my family is. My true joy comes from serving. Yes, I love serving you all, but I love something even more. I love serving the least and the lost. Tears will often come to my eyes and a longing in my heart to be in a third world country giving what I have to give to the poor. There is no greater treasure on earth. I miss the days we spent in Kensington, Philadelphia, serving meals and smiles to the homeless. I miss being with Morris Bender in Trenton serving meals to the Hispanic population that they minister to there.

But why miss it? Are there not plenty of opportunities to serve the least and the lost? Sure there are. This week I was called and asked if I would lead a bible study at Project Freedom in Trenton. This would be bringing the Word to shut-ins and handicapped individuals who cannot make it to church. A couple times this month the Lord spoke to me about spontaneously giving money to people. Other times He nudged me to give an encouraging word to those who seem to be troubled. There are many ways to spread the joy. How about you? Can you see the opportunities that the Lord brings you each day?

*Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room*

I can see that joy comes by making room for Jesus. To prepare Him room means to open our hearts to His presence. When He comes, He comes to give. That is His nature. When our hearts are prepared we can receive Him fully. When we receive Him fully, we can liberally give as he gives. May you have the Merriest Christmas as you receive and give Christ to the least and to the lost.