

# *Los Altos Church of Christ*

*"...being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." Philippians 2:2*

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## **This Sunday...Extra Wait**

Waiting is so hard. Whether it's waiting in line, waiting because you are put on hold when you call to order a pizza, waiting for that first baby to arrive (the second always seems to come quicker) or waiting for Christmas, waiting is hard. But waiting is an essential part of our relationship with God. This week Rick Atchley once again adds some extra characters to the typical Nativity Scene...Simeon and Anna. They were two people who knew a lot about waiting on God to fulfill his promises.



**Bringing Our Gifts To Jesus...** This Sunday would have been our special Christmas service, the time we know as "Bringing Our Gifts To Jesus." You can still keep this tradition alive by bringing gift cards by Jeff and Karen's house or mailing them. You can even order cards online and email the cards to them! We will be sending them again to Southeastern Children's Home and to Mountain States Christian Home. (Links to both works can be found on the church webpage.) Ideas for gifts cards: Target, Walmart, Kohls, JCPenney and Amazon.



**PRAYERS** *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6-7*

- **Young Michael (aka Bubba) Howell, Mike Rosenthal, Don Beckwith and Don's son John have been diagnosed with Covid. Other family members are being tested. Please be careful!**

**Continue to pray** that the Lord watch over our members during this time... John and Jennifer...Terry (Rosique) Benson ...Roger Townsend...Tim's heart condition...Berry... Jeff's mother...Blake... Jene's hand...Christine's mother...Bill Spivey ... Allen Sawyers...The Britton Family ... Barbara... Sadie Smith... Gwen and her son Caleb... Emmy Creswick... Jene's friend, Jim Thorpe... Lu...City of Children... Healing Hands International... Japhet's work in Zimbabwe...and New Hope Uganda.

## **The Gift of Christmas: The Hassle By Phil Ware**

We were young, poor, and out of our minds. That's the only explanation I can give for why we tried to fly from Dallas to Dayton on Christmas Eve. Of course our connection was in good ol' crowded, icy, full of exhausted and irate travelers O'Hare airport in Chicago. Our children were young. Our youngest was a toddler with an ear infection. Yep, we had to have lots of diapers for the side effects!

We arrived at DFW airport 3 hours early. We had plenty of time to kill until we checked in at curbside. Our flight was already over 2 hours behind schedule. We ran up the stairs, found a help desk, and were told that if we ran, we might make another flight that would connect to O'Hare in time for us to get to Dayton. We grabbed our tickets, garment bag, stroller, and kids... then RAN!

We made it by a good 40 seconds. The door hit me in the backside as I entered. We had no idea where the flight was headed or how many stops it would make before Chicago. We didn't have on our coats or know where our luggage was. All the gifts were in the suitcases. But our adventure had begun.

Our first stop was somewhere in Nebraska. The jet-ways weren't heated. I learned this when someone grabbed the garment bag with all of our coats and left behind an identical one. I grabbed it, ran after him and FROZE! I fought my way through the crowd, traded garment bags, and got back in line to get on our plane but I left my ticket on the plane! They let me back on after a few minutes of explanation. They figured nobody from Nebraska would be out in -4 degree weather without a coat. Meanwhile, Donna was pouring Amoxicillin and Benadryl down our daughter while changing diapers.

We landed in O'Hare and sat on the tarmac 45 minutes before being allowed to "dock" and unload. By then, we had ten minutes to get to our next flight which was at the opposite end of the O'Hare. Before we could run, oops, we had to have another diaper and bathroom stop. When we arrived to board, there were over 100 people in line trying to fly standby and they had begun boarding them. We weren't going to get on even though we had a reserved ticket. The line was too long. We were going to have to spend Christmas Eve in the O'Hare airport with a sick kid. Our kids weren't going to have Christmas... We were on the verge of parental meltdown! Two wonderful men from Oklahoma City overheard our plight, grabbed my arm and put me in line with them. "Look son, you have a ticket, you have a little kids, you're getting to Dayton for Christmas!" This Longhorn was ready to sing Boomer Sooner!

To make this long story short, we finally arrived, 2 hours late in Dayton. We were exhausted, but our kids were excited out of their minds! Our luggage was somewhere over North America. When we arrived at the grandparents' house, Santa was waiting. He asked them what they wanted and promised it would be there in the morning. (Santa had more faith than we did! He also didn't know we didn't get to Dayton with our luggage.)

At 2:00 in the morning, my father-in-law and I went to the airport freight area. It was now a blowing blizzard with very little visibility. Somehow the bags had gotten there. They were wet, muddy, and banged around, but we got them in car and slid our way home. On Christmas morning, stockings were stuffed, presents were in place, and our kids had one of their best Christmases ever! They had no idea how much work and sacrifice went into making this Christmas "merry and bright." They just shared in the joy of family and Christmas.

Christmas is often about frenetic activity and bone-crushing work. Often, the gifts that are received come with little or no awareness of what it took to get them there or the cost needed to make the day a glorious one. But that is only fair, isn't it? For the greatest gift we've received came via a long difficult journey, fraught with all sorts of logistical problems, and fears that the night be spent in place unsuitable for a mom and her young child. You see, the difficulties of our human Christmas can, if we let it, remind us of the most awesome of truths: While we may know the gift we've received from God, we can't begin to understand the great cost at which that gift came.

So if your Christmas is full of manic work and unwanted hassle, just remember, sacrifice and hassle is really what provided us with the greatest gift of all.

*Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8 NLT)*