

DECEMBER: HOPE REALIZED

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Life can be a constant December: Preparation, work, and a tiring pursuit of things in order to provide for an eventual time of celebration. The other part of December is a shedding of those busy things to prepare mind and heart for a time of awareness of God's gift of a Savior. The older we get, it seems, the harder the shedding part is to do.

As children, our eyes were wide open to the sparkling wonders of the season. If we were told about the Christ child, His story caused a sense of wonderment. There are fascinating things in these stories: Kings bringing gifts, a star over the stable, God loving us so much He gave us His Son – a baby – who would save us from our sins.

Fast forward to adulthood; at the end of the year in December, some of us are pushing forward very un-childlike, too weary to dream...except for a glimmer.

With its exhaustion and exploitation, here is Christmas again with that special twinkle of memory: this little spark is intertwined in the tiring pursuit of life. If we let it, Christmas is a call to dwell on more than a mere glimmer of hope. In part, our hope expands to thoughts that light will overcome darkness, innocence will be prized, and that we can be liberated from our fears, but, even more...hope that we are not abandoned by God. December is when we are reminded of what God mercifully gives us through the gift of His Son.

The late Charles Schultz's first animated TV production, "A Charlie Brown Christmas," carried the sweetest soliloquy. Charlie Brown laments, "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" Linus says, "Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about." (*If you get a chance, watch it on YouTube.com. It has been viewed over 2.5 million times.) The younger child, Linus, goes center stage with simple respect and quotes from Luke 2:4-18. His voice a perfect antidote to adult weariness when he says, "And there were in the same country shepherds, keeping watch over their flock by night and Lo..."

If you are one of the weary ones, pause in your activity and let yourself be stirred early in your "December" to open yourself to childlike hope realized.

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