

RANSOMED
HEART
ministries

December 2007

As I was making breakfast this morning, I was asking Jesus what he wanted me to write to you in this letter, the last letter of the year.

I knew it was time for me to sit down and write my December letter, and it felt significant. What should I say? I could give you an update on all that God has done through Ransomed Heart this year. It would be breathtaking. Or, I could talk about Christmas. Maybe offer some insights on the Incarnation. I realized I could write about a hundred different things. (All this was going through my mind as I futzed around the kitchen). So I stopped, and simply asked God. *What would you have me write about, Lord?* And this is what he said,

My Love.

A deep sigh. A sort of quiet coming into my soul. A “returning” of sorts, returning in my own heart to his love. *Right. Your love.* But of course. This is the one thing we most need. This is the one thing God most wants us to “get.” His love. And it is the one thing we seem to lose touch with or sight of most easily. I think that’s because the deepest doubts of our hearts all center around love, don’t they? And the deepest of those deep doubts are about the heart of God towards us in particular.

Love is the greatest need of any human soul. Which is why our deepest wounds have to do with love in one form or another. And when a person knows, really *knows* they are loved, they interpret life so completely differently from the person who doesn’t know they are loved. And it is the love of God, above every other joy, that heals our hearts and sets us free. To love. Which is the purpose of our existence.

So let me simply say this – Christmas is an annual reminder of the expansive depth and generosity of God’s love. For you.

Even the pagan world knows this. I stopped into Starbucks the other day (yes, I stop there occasionally) and noticed that their December theme is “spread the cheer.” Even though the world has lost the Christ of Christmas, they still know that this season is supposed to be about love, about being kind and generous, spreading joy and doing things for other people. As Scrooge’s nephew confessed, “I have always thought of Christmas time, when it comes round, as a good time, a kind, forgiving, charitable time. The only time I know of when men and women seem to open their shut-up hearts freely.” That’s because the love of God is so deeply woven into Christmas the world can’t shake it, even if they’ve shaken off God. It’s about love. A generous, joyful love.

Whenever the Scriptures speak about the coming of Jesus to earth, they also remind us of God’s love. As John said, God so loved us, he gave his son (3:16). Paul echoed when he wrote that God *demonstrates* his love for us by sending Jesus (Romans 5:8). Jesus came. You are loved. That’s the heart of Christmas.

Life seems to rail against this truth. We are, all of us, hit with a thousand reasons to doubt God’s heart toward us. I’m speaking of the pain and disappointment of any life. And on top of all that, there is the enemy, who loves to twist the knife of our heartaches, all the while whispering, *You cannot trust God’s heart. You are forgotten. Forsaken. You are not loved.* But no. NO! The Father sent Jesus. That can never be undone. It proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that you *are* loved. More than you yet know.

So, let this be your unceasing prayer this Christmas. Just hold onto this one thought, whenever and wherever you go this month: *I am loved*. When you see a Christmas tree, think to yourself, *I am loved*. *That's what this is all about*. When you hear a Christmas song (how can you avoid them?), when you buy a present for someone, and when you receive a gift of any kind from someone else, when you see a wreath or a poinsettia or a manger scene, say to yourself, *I am loved*. *That's what this is all about*.

It will do your heart great good.

I hope you have enjoyed my letters this year. It's one of the ways I try and stay in touch, and offer something of the treasure of the Gospel each month. We also make available the "daily reading," an email sent to you each day with a short reading, sort of a devotional. You can subscribe to that for free on our website at www.ransomedheart.com. We've also begun "podcasting" some of our audio resources free of charge (you can find those on Itunes, just type in ("Ransomed Heart"), and starting next year we'll be offering even more on our re-built website, including a weekly video. Our gift to your heart. (You are loved).

You might have noticed the envelope we include each month. You might have wondered why. We are a ministry, supported by the gifts of our friends and allies. I don't mention that very often, because I'm far more concerned about your heart. But in being silent I might have given a wrong impression, that we have no needs. So let me say we *do* have needs. We need your support. All that we do here we do with the help of the generosity of our supporters. If you could help us here at the end of the year, we would be joyfully grateful. Simply ask God, *Lord, what would you have me do to help Ransomed Heart?*

That's how I started the day today – asking God what he'd have me do.

He told me to remind you of his love.

From all of us here at Ransomed Heart, a very merry and loving Christmas to you and yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'John' written in a cursive, flowing style.

John