

Meditation For a Christmas Day

Considering the vintage of most of us, I don't imagine many woke up to the excitement of children over the gifts that Santa left overnight. There is always room for children and that other side of Christmas, and to be quite honest, I miss those days with my own children. But maybe you also gave a moment's thought to the real reason we celebrate this day. Never has an event that took place so long ago, generated such enduring excitement around the world, and yet, even the significance of that wonderful night has lost some of its glow, and it's really so sad.

When I was just a toddler, we were still in the Great Depression and storm clouds of war were on the horizon. The factory where my dad worked had failed, putting everyone out of a job. I still remember my mom walking with me to some city park where my dad was cutting grass for the Parks Board in return for a voucher to buy food or maybe a bag of coal for heat. It was tough times, but faith in the Christ prevailed, and we knew that better times would return, and they did.

My grandparents lived just half a block from us, and I learned a lot about faith from them. They were on board the SS Athenia returning home after visiting family in England, and both survived when the ship was torpedoed and sank on the day Britain declared war. They were convinced that God was there with them, and God was spoken every day in their home.

I miss those days, and do you know something else that is missing.....? The Sabbath.....we no longer observe the Sabbath as it was. All businesses including stores were closed, and most families attended church, and then spent the afternoon visiting one another.

Abraham Joshua Heschel says this about the seventh day in his book, "The Sabbath, "He who wants to enter the holiness of the day must first lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil. He must go away from the screech of dissonant days, from the nervousness and fury of acquisitiveness, and the betrayal in embezzling his own life." "The love of the Sabbath is the love of man for what he and God have in common."

Of course, Abraham Heschel is Jewish, and his seventh day is Saturday, but no matter, his thoughts are dead on. Have a wonderful Christmas folks.

Brian Reis