

A Personal Christmas Message
by Tricia Vandiver

Celebrating Christmas has become particularly special to me since coming to Christ. You see, I spent most of my adult life not believing that I needed to be saved, really scoffing at the idea that I had this issue of "sin", that God was real, that he would judge me. I laughed at Christians and thought the things they believed were foolish. Religion that suited me was one that fit my line of thinking, and Christianity did not fit my line of thinking.

And then one night, the weight of making decisions for myself and my family became too much and I cried out to God. And he made himself known to me. I knew there was a God. And I thought that if he would make himself known to me, that he was real, that he might also help me to know him better. So I began asking him to help me to know him. I felt like I was being prompted to read the bible, but I didn't agree with that, because I had already read the bible (meaning I had read a couple of verses one time and made up my mind about what to believe about Christianity based on that). So I began watching personal testimonies of people coming to Christ, as a sort of "compromise". And I actually found the evidence compelling. Eventually I did get a bible. Reading it this time was a lot different, and I really wrestled with what it was saying and wanted to look into it. I also found a church that went through the bible verse by verse as a study and was willing to listen to what I felt were very basic questions. I read a lot, watched a lot of videos, asked a lot of questions. I did not come to faith in Christ right away—it took almost a year from the time I cried out to God to the day that I understood that I had been forgiven. I am glad that I kept pursuing the truth, and I would encourage anybody to do the same - and be willing to go wherever it leads, even if it is an uncomfortable place.

I write all of this to say that faith in Christ does not have to come easy, nor does it need to come by way of ignorance (as I once thought all Christians must be). In fact, if you read the New Testament and you consider what the apostles preached, you will see that they carefully considered the evidence and were willing to enter in to much discussion in order to prove that what they had witnessed and were preaching was true. You will also see that the apostles themselves had questions and wrestled with seeing Jesus for who he was. It is no small thing that God entered in to humanity.

There is so much evidence for the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. If you have never considered the evidence, if you thought there wasn't any evidence, or if you have ignored the evidence, I urge you to begin looking and considering the evidence. More than that, I urge you to consider your personal need for salvation. We are all in need of being reconciled to God. If we are honest, we really are in need of being saved. And that way is made possible through Jesus Christ.

This Christmas, as you celebrate with various traditions, if you haven't already, I encourage you to really look in to the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. And I encourage you to examine your own heart and really ask yourself, "If God really is holy, can I really stand before him in judgement? Am I really enough to save myself?"

And if you have any questions at all, I would encourage you to find a Christian that you can ask questions. You are always welcome to ask us any questions you have. Each of us (Darren, Anne & Tricia) have come to Christ with our own personal testimony of how God saved us.

Tricia Vandiver