

*“May the words of my mouth and the meditation my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and My Redeemer” —Psalm 19:14 NIV*

We are in the “holiday” season (or will be shortly), I am not really sure when it begins anymore. In a few weeks we will stop and be “thankful”. Thankful for the bounty of our lives, our families, etc. We may look for ways to help those who we see as being less fortunate. We might give a check to the local food kitchen, maybe even volunteer to help prepare and serve a Thanksgiving dinner. And, then we move on to Christmas and celebrate the coming of the Christ, the Messiah, the King of King and Lord of Lords.

And, as we do some will get caught up in the trivial. Now, let me back up a bit. I was taught to say “please and thank you”. These words were important for me to use. They have become a part of who I am - I occasionally forget to use them but for most of the time these words come automatically to me. We taught our sons to do the same. I try to smile and greet people as I pass them by - occasionally thinking they are responding back when all they are doing is talking on their blue tooth! I wonder if I have missed some greetings because I just assumed they were talking on their phone and not to me - so many are today. Sometimes it is “Hi” or “How are you?” or “Hello” or some other form of greeting. I am not as concerned about the word(s) used as in the greeting itself.

Now, let me move forward to the trivial. Some are again up in arms because not everyone says, “Merry Christmas” - they may say “Happy Holidays” or some other form of greeting. And those caught up in the trivial seem to think that we are losing the Christ of Christmas if we change the greeting. Let me assure you we are not - we lost the Christ of Christmas to Santa and reindeer, Frosty and snowmen many, many years ago. We have already given Christmas over to Hallmark and department stores. We have bought into the commercialism of the day - even those of us who protest that we didn't - we really have - to some degree. Now, we want to try to reclaim it by what we say or what others say — when we need to reclaim by our actions.

I have come to the conclusion that is not so much what we say, but what we do. Can we really say “Merry Christmas” and not follow the example of the one who came? Can we really say those words and not feed the hungry, clothe the naked and seek shelter for those who are homeless? Or, strive for peace in a world filled with war. If we really want a “Merry Christmas” should not our actions be towards the goals and actions of the One whose birth we celebrate? If I want you to have a Merry Christmas then I should make sure that you are fed, clothed and housed. If I want you to have a Merry Christmas I should work so that wherever you are you are in a peaceful place, free from war and destruction. I should be making sure that you are not discriminated against because of “however” you are different than I am. I should follow the example of the Babe of Bethlehem in forgiving, loving and building bridges.

If it was me I would have added “and the works of my hands” to the 19th Psalm. We are bombarded by words — so many words. It will only get worse over these next few months as we build to the 2016 election. More and more debates, name calling, words, words, and then more words. Most will be accompanied by no actions. What would happen this holiday season in our words were accompanied by our actions? Would we truly have a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas without even saying the words?

May your days be blessed by the One who came in a manger in Bethlehem — May his light shine through our words and actions. May his LOVE flow through all of us.

