

Today's Advent Devotional from Pastor Jeff:  
Advent Devotional for Saturday, December 8, 2018

A child is born to us, a son is given to us... (Isaiah 9:6)

The advent struggle continues as I write this devotional. Hopefully the struggle will be over by the time you read this devotional. It is the struggle I mentioned the other day, the struggle of light and darkness. It is the struggle of putting lights on the pre-lit artificial tree. Not all the lights on the pre-lit tree light up. So, I add a strand, or two, or three or....

It is a decent tree, we didn't purchase the tree. We traded, bartered for the tree. Our previous neighbors needed more outdoor lights for their house and they had a tree they were getting rid of. We had extra lights and we were wanting a tree. So, it was a good trade. We traded, bartered, made an exchange for the tree.

Sometimes at Christmas, our gift-giving can be like a trade, an exchange. Sometimes, it is even called a "gift-exchange." And sometimes that is how we view the gifts God gives. We think that since God gives us something, we are obligated to give something in return. Or we think that God will only give to us if we give something in return. Or, we give to God expecting something in return. Bartering, trading, exchanging is not gift giving.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us... (Isaiah 9:6)

There was no bartering by God when giving us His Son. God didn't say, "I will give you my Son, if you give me..." God didn't say, "Because of what you have provided me, in exchange I will..." What God gave was and still is a true gift. A gift freely given. A gift that does not require anything in return. A gift that is there for us to receive.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us... (Isaiah 9:6)

Enjoy the gift.

Pastor Jeff

P.S.  
The choir cantata, Appalachian Winter will be presented at Belton FUMC on Sunday, December 9 at 10:45 a.m. (Choir members, staff and church members without mobility issues are asked to park at the Masonic lodge).

The choir cantata, Appalachian Winter will be presented at Harker Heights UMC on Sunday, December 16th at 10:30 a.m.