

The Gift (Whole Heart)

by Tricia Berg

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and whoever comes to Me I will never cast out." John 6:37

During December we traditionally think of God's gift of His only begotten Son to us. I would like us to consider that we believers are part of God the Father's gift to His Son, Jesus, our Savior. What kind of gifts are we? Will He be happy to receive us? Do we love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength? I think we would all agree that He deserves nothing less!

The other part of the gift is the Kingdom, where those who belong to Jesus, who is High Priest in the everlasting order of Melchizedek, will rule with Him as part of a royal priesthood, forever. If we have been given by the Father to the Son, then we have the Holy Spirit within us and are His temple. Wow. Is that profound or what? Let's be the best present EVER, starting NOW. Let's give Him our WHOLE hearts, just as He gave His LIFE for us. He alone is worthy. (Bible verses are below.)

Let's also bear in mind that the Israelites who refused to go into the promised land due to lack of faith did not get another chance. They all died in the desert except for Joshua and Caleb, who were the only ones who wanted to go in. Joshua (a name almost identical to the Hebrew name for Jesus) and Caleb had to wander in the desert, enduring hardship for forty years before they could enter. That is a picture of our "wilderness" experience and walking by faith while we wait for our turn as believers to enter the "promised land."

I'd also like to share with you something I recently learned. Many people have said that the name "Caleb" means "dog." This bothered me because Caleb was faithful and dogs are usually mentioned in a derogatory manner in the Bible. I discovered that the word for dog is "celeb," whereas the name Caleb is a combination of two words (just as Yeshua means Yah is Salvation). The first part of Caleb's name means "all" and the second part means "heart." Caleb means "whole-hearted," which God verifies for us when He said:

"And the LORD heard your words and was angered, and he swore, 35 'Not one of these men of this evil generation shall see the good land that I swore to give to your fathers, 36 except Caleb the son of Jephunneh. He shall see it, and to him and to his children I will give the land on which he has trodden, because he has wholly followed the LORD!'" Deuteronomy 1:34-36

Let's "wholly follow the Lord" like Caleb--a worthy companion of Joshua, who took the people into the promised land--just as we belong to Jesus, who will take us in after we have followed Him whole-heartedly through this wilderness. Let's not be like the ones who wandered in the desert and then died, never going in to the promised land. How sad is that? Be like Caleb.

Bible Verses:

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day." John 6:44

"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. 8 For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them." John 17:6-10

"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one." John 10:27-30

So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you"; 6 as he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." Hebrews 5:5-6

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4-5

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1 Peter 2:9-10

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:13-14

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16

But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. 1 Corinthians 6:17-20

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 15 What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, 18 and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Notice that Jesus tells the scribe that he is "not far from the kingdom of God" when he agrees with Him on the two greatest commands. God wants our WHOLE HEART and ALL of us--following in deed not just words, DOING as He says, not only hearing. (John 4:23, 1 John 3:18, James 1:22)

And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. 33 And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not

far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions. Mark 12:32-34

[Caleb said] "I was forty years old when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to spy out the land, and I brought him word again as it was in my heart. 8 But my brothers who went up with me made the heart of the people melt; yet I wholly followed the LORD my God. 9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, 'Surely the land on which your foot has trodden shall be an inheritance for you and your children forever, because you have wholly followed the LORD my God.'" Joshua 14:7-9

Then Joshua blessed him, and he gave Hebron to Caleb the son of Jephunneh for an inheritance. 14 Therefore Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite to this day, because he wholly followed the LORD, the God of Israel. Joshua 14:13-14

Let your heart therefore be wholly true to the LORD our God, walking in his statutes and keeping his commandments, as at this day." 1 Kings 8:61

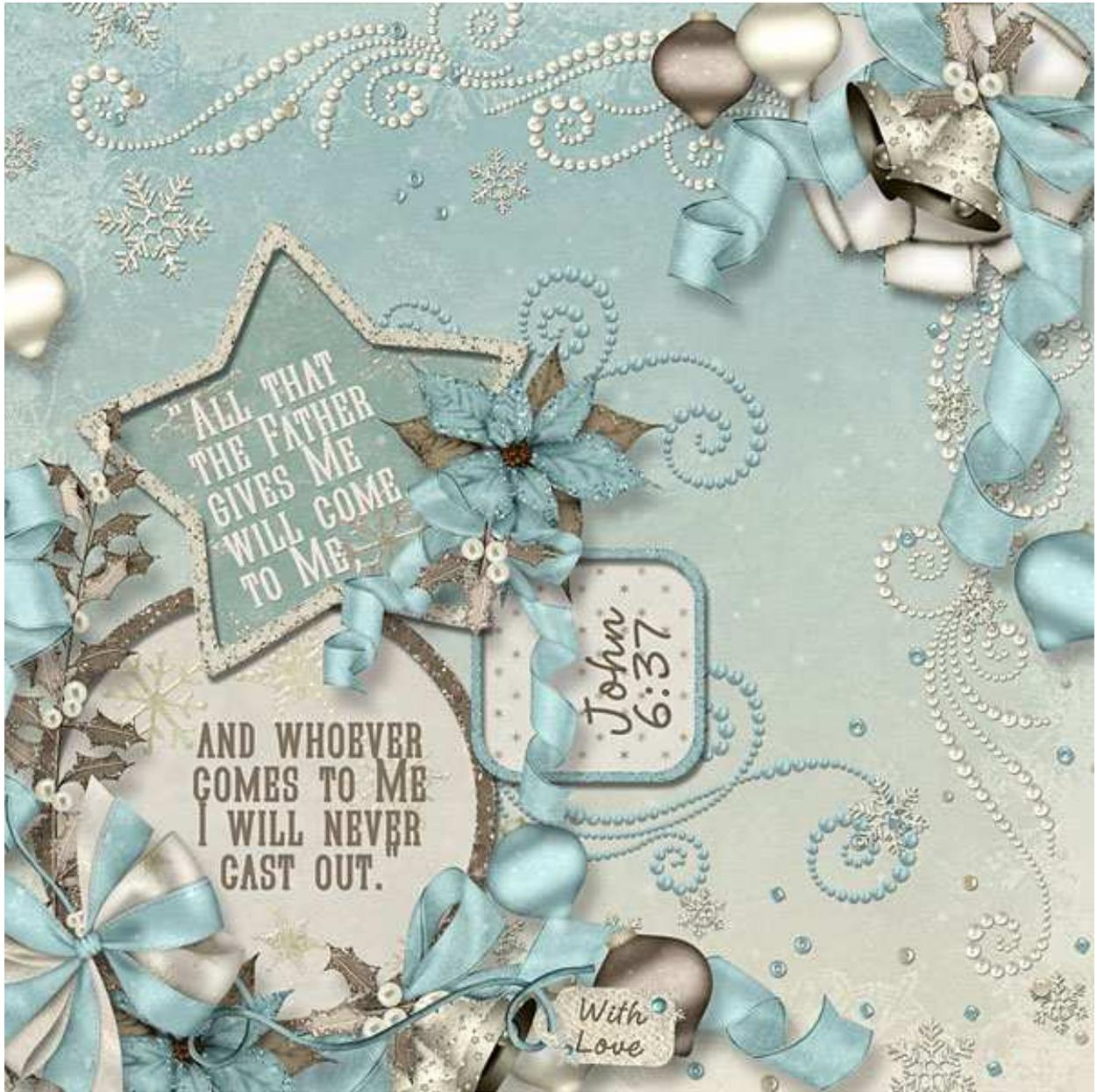
Blessed are those who keep his testimonies, who seek him with their whole heart, 3 who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways! Psalm 119:2-3

Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, 3 and said, "Please, O LORD, remember how I have walked before you in faithfulness and with a whole heart, and have done what is good in your sight." And Hezekiah wept bitterly. Isaiah 38:2-3

I will give them a heart to know that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people and I will be their God, for they shall return to me with their whole heart. Jeremiah 24:7

You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:13

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