



December 2011

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe that another year is coming to an end. Are you ready for Christmas? Have you been singing Christmas carols or hearing them on the radio? There are some radio stations on the day after thanksgiving that only play Christmas music. Christmas has always been my favorite time of year because I love the cold weather, the lights and decorations catch my eyes, the beautiful music sounds lovely to my ears, and I get to spend time with my family. Christmas brings a special kind of joy along with the season.

I grew up attending Church and we always went at Christmas time. I never had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ until two and a half years ago. I spent more than thirty years angry with God because my father passed away with cancer when I was four. I spent all of those years angry that God took my father away and held onto that anger and resentment. I spent my time focused on the things I missed because my father wasn't there. He wasn't there to hold me when I got hurt, he wasn't there to tell me how proud he was of me when I succeeded, he wasn't there to see me graduate from high school and college, he wasn't there to walk me down the aisle when I got married, he wasn't there to help me when I made poor choices in life. In Hebrews 13:5 God says, "Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you." When I started attending church again and became baptized in 2009 God had opened my heart and my eyes to see that my heavenly Father was with me all along and my earthly father was loving me from afar. Understanding this one important fact that I am never alone has had the greatest impact on my life. Knowing that God is always with me has brought me a peace that surpasses all understanding.

When I started attending church and joined a Sunday school class and Bible study I kept hearing people express that God speaks to them. I read about God speaking to people in the Bible thousands of years ago and now I was hearing how God speaks to people still today. I wanted to hear God speak to me and tell me how to follow His path. I spoke with my pastor about this and wondered if I was doing something wrong. He encouraged me to continue reading my Bible and praying and I would soon begin to hear God speak to me when I read the Bible or through other people when they shared their life with me. I continued to read my Bible and pray and through each trial I faced I did begin to hear God speaking to me through His Word (The Bible). Psalm 37:39-40, "The salvation of the righteous comes from the LORD' he is their stronghold in time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him."

During a current trial, my husband and I are facing some difficult times due to choices from our past. We were expecting to hear a major decision that will have a big impact on our lives on December 8<sup>th</sup>. We had placed our trust in God and I was hoping with Christmas just around the corner; that would impact the decision. The date was postponed to January and I was devastated. While frustrated and angry about the date change, I was talking with my husband while he was at work and told him that I was depending on the Holiday Spirit to have an impact on the decision. At that very moment he received a phone call and had to place me on hold. During the silence I heard God speak clearly to my heart. He told me that I didn't need to place my trust in the holiday spirit, but instead I need to place all of my faith, trust and peace in the HOLY SPIRIT. Wow! I actually heard God speak right to me. He heard my cries for help and He spoke to me! When my husband came back on the phone, it was like he was talking to a new person. I shared with my husband what God said while I was on hold and now I am sharing this with everyone I encounter. Since that moment, I have been given a peace in my heart because I know that the Holy Spirit is here with me. In John 16:33 Jesus says, "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

I have learned so much from this experience and I am enjoying Christmas in a new way this year. "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

So my prayer for you this Holiday Season is that God places you on hold and silences the noise around you so that you can hear Him speak clearly to your heart. He is calling your name. If you haven't met Him yet, look for His shining star and answer His call. There you will find the peace and joy you have been searching for.

Love and peace to you all,

Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

Hark! the herald angels sing,	*	Let there be peace on earth
"Glory to the new born King,	*	And let it begin with me.
peace on earth, and mercy mild,	*	Let there be peace on earth
God and sinners reconciled!"	*	The peace that was meant to be.
Joyful, all ye nations rise,	*	With God as our father
join the triumph of the skies;	*	Brothers all are we.
with th' angelic host proclaim,	*	Let me walk with my brother
"Christ is born in Bethlehem!"	*	In perfect harmony.