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*"Christ caring for People
through People"*

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Ephesians 1 (The Message)

How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations, he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son. It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for.

John 1 (The Message)

The Word was first. The Word was God, in readiness for God from day one. Everything was created through him; nothing - not one thing! - came into being without him. What came into existence was Life, and the Life was Light to live by. The Life-Light blazed out of the darkness; the darkness couldn't put it out. The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighbourhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like Son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish. John pointed him out and called, "This is the One! The One I told you was coming after me but in fact was ahead of me. He has always been ahead of me, has always had the first word." We all live off his generous bounty, gift after gift after gift. We got the basics from Moses, and then this exuberant giving and receiving, this endless knowing and understanding - all this came through Jesus, the Messiah..

Happy New Year!

The plainest reason why the Son of God is called the Word seems to be, that, as our words explain our minds to others, so was the Son of God sent in order to reveal his Father's mind to the world. All things were made by him from the highest angel to the meanest worm. Thus He is perfectly qualified for the work of our redemption and salvation. Light and life are derived from him, and depend upon him. This eternal Word, this true Light shines, but the darkness can neither understand nor extinguish it. Let us pray without ceasing, that our eyes may be opened to behold this Light that we may walk in it by faith in Jesus Christ.

I love the connections of the celebrations at this time of year. First we celebrate Jesus coming into the world at Bethlehem. Then immediately we celebrate a New Year. It is a New Year indeed when Christ enters our lives. As we live in Christ and He lives in us we live "a resurrection life, a far better life than people ever lived on their own." (2 Cor. 5 - The Message) "Because of this decision we don't evaluate people by what they have or how they look. We looked at the Messiah that way once and got it all wrong. Now we look inside, and what we see is that anyone united with the Messiah gets a fresh start, is created new. The old life is gone; a new life blossoms! Look at it! All this comes from God who settled the relationship between us and him - calls us to settle our relationships with each other."

This opportunity for a new beginning is indeed fantastic. There are many times in our lives when situations or relationships are imperfect. We all need opportunities for fresh starts. By turning in faith to Christ it is always possible to be forgiven, renewed and to start fresh. Daily we ought to give thanks for this reality. Each morning is a perfect time to invite God to enter anew into our hearts and minds and to guide us and empower us to walk in his paths. Is there something that you need to leave behind; some part of your life where you want a 'mulligan,' a do-over? God makes it possible. *"As the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love,"* what a way to start each new day, let alone a New Year! God's Blessings on you, each one.

(Rev.) John McGurrin