

Bermudian Church of the Brethren

**WEDNESDAY's WORD** – a midweek thought from Pastor Larry M. Dentler

to share a word of inspiration ... encouragement ... challenge ... a smile ... in the middle of your week

December 7 in the year of our Lord 2016 - #675      **SECOND WEEK IN ADVENT**

## The Pap With A Strap

Shhhhhhhhhhhhh! The following is 'top secret' ... if you know my seven year old grandson Jericho, please don't tell!

Jericho loves his "straps!" His favorite is an old piece of plastic strapping like comes around a parcel. Really ... he doesn't need other toys. He can entertain himself for hours with the strap. He gets lost in his imagination ... jumping, swirling, waving the strap ... he's a superhero lost in conflict with a villain. On the furniture! On the large rock in the next yard. With an assortment of unintelligible sounds as he twirls and swirls and squeals and waves his strap. Zwerisssssss! Shropxyksst! Phhttttttttttttttttt!

It might be his favorite ... or an old bungee cord ... or a piece of string ... or an old piece of rubber cord ... he loves his straps!

I had a great Christmas idea! On a day when he was at school I'd gather up all his straps, along with some new strapping I had saved from parcels ... and I'd secretly hide them to wrap up as a joke for Christmas morning. He has so many toys ... he certainly wouldn't miss them. Right? That afternoon he came home from school ... walked right to his toy area ... looked around and declared, "*Where's my strap!?*"

For hours he searched high and low, inside and out. Jessie told me that night, "*He's very concerned, that's all he talks about. I'm not sure we can wait until Christmas!*" So ... change of plans for old Pap! I brought his favorite strap in and placed it in his toy area ... and the next morning wove a tale of a naughty elf who is playing games with him. A little like the "Elf On The Shelf" craze that many families are enjoying – where a little stuffed toy elf shows up in a different place each morning ... our game "The Pap With A Strap" ... finds the "naughty elf" hiding the strap in a different place each morning. It's been hanging from the dining room light, inside a Hess truck, and this morning was inside his cereal box when he opened it! We're having fun ... and I have some devious plans for the days ahead until Christmas!

But what still amazes me is how quickly he missed his strap the first day ... and how diligently he searched for it!

I wonder ... am I ... are you ... as intent ... as committed ... to seeking the Lord? When daily pressures ... when difficult times ... when other distractions ... keep me from time with my Lord or make me feel distant from Him ... do I seek Him with all my heart?

Advent & Christmas can be a time when we feel the Presence of the Lord in beautiful ... wonderful ... amazing ways! When love is expressed ... when worship is heartfelt ...

when songs fill the air ... when Scripture comes to life ... when caring for those in need becomes a priority ... Christ feels so near! But it can also be a time when Christ seems pushed away. Too busy ... too rushed ... not enough time ... not enough energy ... not enough money ... and Christ becomes lost in the mess like the crumpled wrapping paper after opening presents!

A.W. Tozer said, *"Christ came to bring peace and we celebrate His coming by making peace impossible for six weeks of each year .... He came to help the poor and we heap gifts upon those who do not need them."*

So dear ones, seek the Lord with all your heart in Christmas! Let every Christmas carol, every Christmas Scripture, every heart-warming Christmas story, every moment of Christmas worship, the excitement of children, the lights in the darkness, the love of family, the opportunity to share love & care with another ... let it all draw you close to Jesus! Look for Him and you will find Him!

***"I love those who love me. Those eagerly looking for me will find me."*** Proverbs 8:17 GW

***"When you look for me with all your heart, you will find me."*** Jeremiah 29:13 NIV

***"God, You are my God. I search for You. I thirst for You like someone in a dry, empty land where there is no water."*** Psalm 63:1 NCV

Zzzrweisschtz! Pastor Larry <><