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Let's Keep Christmas

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Let's Keep Christmas

Maybe there is nothing in a store that they need. But what about some token of love — what about love itself, and friendship, consideration, a helping hand, a smile, and a prayer?

Let's not permit the crowds and the rush to crowd Christmas out of our hearts — for that is where it belongs. Christmas is not in the stores but in the hearts of people. Let's not mutter that "Christmas has become commercialized." Your Christmas is not commercialized unless you have commercialized it.

I thank God for Christmas. Would that it lasted all year. For on Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day, all the world is a better place, and men and women are more lovable. Love itself seeps into every heart and miracles happen.

When Christmas doesn't make your heart swell up until it nearly bursts. . . and fill your eyes with tears. . . and make you all soft and warm inside. . . then you'll know that something inside of you is dead.

Isn't it wonderful to think that nothing can really harm the joy of Christmas. Although your tree decorations will include many new, it's the old that mean the most, the ones you save carefully from year to year. And you'll bring out the tiny manger and lovingly arrange the little figures of the Holy Family. There will be the fragrance of cookies baking. And you'll listen to the wonderful Christmas music on the radio. Some of the songs will be modern, but it will be the old carols, the lovely old Christmas hymns that will mean the most. Forests of greens will march right into our living rooms. There will be bells on our doors and holly wreaths in our windows.

And then you will remember what Christmas means. The promise that the angels sang is the most wonderful music the world has ever heard. "Peace on earth and good will toward men." In a world that seems to be not only changing but even dissolving, there are some tens of millions of us who want Christmas to be the same. . . with the same old greeting "Merry Christmas" and no other. We long for the abiding love among men of good will which the season brings. Believing in this ancient miracle of Christmas with its softening, sweetening influence tugs at our heart strings once again.

So we will not "spend" Christmas. . . nor "observe" Christmas. We will "keep" Christmas — keep it as it is in all the loveliness of its ancient traditions.

May we keep it in our hearts, that we may be kept in its hope.

by Peter Marshall
Condensed from Sermon

CHANGES are everywhere. Many institutions and customs that we once thought sacred have gone by the board. Yet there are a few that abide, defying time and revolution.

There is no need to search for stories new and different. There is only one after all — and no modern author can improve it:

"And there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them,

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

We all feel the pressure of approaching Christmas. The traffic is terrible, and the stores are crowded. You are thinking about presents — wondering what in the world you can get for so-and-so. You can't think of anything they need (which is rather strange when you take time to think of it).