

Dear Friends:

I was reminded of the miracle of Christmas in a different way this morning. As I was having my devotions, I was reading in 2 Samuel 24 where King David went to Araunah, the Jebusite, and asked to buy his threshing floor to erect an altar to make a peace offering to God, hoping that would cause God to turn aside a plague that had already killed more than 60,000. So, David finds this threshing floor and feels directed by God to purchase it from Araunah so he can turn it into a holy place with an altar to God. He asks Araunah the price of the land and Araunah tries to give it to David. Several times he offers the property for no cost but David would not take it. Listen to his reason for not taking the land without payment: *"I will not accept it (for free)...but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing"* !! Does that remind you of God's Christmas gift to each of us? He didn't shop for the cheapest gift He could find, or look for a bargain, or give us a handmade gift (after all, with all the resources at His disposal he could whip up a mind-blowing gift). NO...NO...NO...God didn't go "on the cheap" to give us our gift. He took His most precious possession, His only Son, and through the miracle of the incarnation, made Him the "gift that keeps on giving". Where would we be today if God had not given His very best for us???? This Christmas season while you are buying gifts for friends and loved one, take a moment to reflect on the value of the gift you are giving God. Is it your very best, your "first fruits", or have you neglected to offer the One who gave it all for you the best of all you are and have????????? If we look at God's giving carefully we will want to find a place of prayer and offer Him the best of our hearts and lives; we will want to sit down with our check book and write out a love gift beyond what we feel we can afford so His Kingdom can prosper; we will want to put Him first in all we do from this point on. As we reflect on God's great gift, I pray we will be like David and refuse to give God anything that costs us nothing.

WOW.....what a great Children's Christmas program. The church was full of folks who came to enjoy the Christmas story from a child's perspective. CONGRATS to Annette and Earl and all the volunteers who helped them with this super program, and, congratulations to all the kids on knowing their lines, singing with gusto, and helping all of us get ready for the season. I especially liked the song that asked, "where is the line to see Jesus"? Thanks to everyone who made the program such a success. Pray that some of the many guests will come back again.

Be sure to check your calendar for the many Christmas events that are coming up in the next couple of weeks, such as Ladies Night Out, Men's breakfast, teen and children's parties, adult party, and the FAMILY CHRISTMAS PROGRAM on December 18. And, remember to make the main thing the main thing during this Advent Season. Come to church Sunday and enjoy a Baby Dedication, great Christmas worship, a Christmas message, and a Baptismal service.

God loves you and so do I, Pastor Warren