

A wonderful story about a memorable Christmas.

When I was a child of about twelve years old, we had a Christmas that I have never forgotten. We grew up in humble means to say the least, but we generally always had one or two gifts under the tree even if they were only socks and underwear.

During this particular Christmas, by good fortune we had many gifts. For the first time in a long time, we received a lot of the things we actually wanted. I was one of seven children, so this was a very big deal. We were all so excited and could hardly wait until Christmas morning.

However, on that Christmas Eve, after careful reflection and much heated discussion, my father decided that it was much too much, and that in this frenzy that we had lost the true meaning of Christmas.

With much trepidation, we were instructed to hand over all but one of our unopened gifts. There was some crying, some anger, some shock and disbelief. What happened next truly astounded us. My father loaded all those gifts into his truck and we all piled in. We went from house to house in our community and handed out our things. Some of the families we knew, some we didn't. All were as poor as we were. Some had no gifts except for ours. As that truck rounded corner after corner, slowly, very slowly, the anger left. The shock and disbelief vanished and were replaced with a different sort of emotion. We all started to feel a overwhelming sense of joy in this service. The mark that this experience left on our lives has changed the way we look at Christmas forever.

Never before had I grasped what Christmas was truly about. It is about unselfish giving. Not of toys or gifts, but giving of ourselves. It was of Christ who would gave the ultimate gift of eternal life.

That experience taught us that at the celebration of his birth, our "giving" should reflect his ultimate sacrifice. He gave the whole of his life in our service and for our sake showing us His love. Hence the best gift we can give to others at Christmas is our time, sharing our talents, and genuine love, as acts of kindness.

Received from Dr. Scott Brooksby.