

# MERRY CHRISTMAS



**H**ave you ever trudged through store after store, searching for the perfect Christmas gifts for those dear to you? When the presents are finally all wrapped and under the tree, something still seems to be missing.

Maybe you worry about losing your job in today's rumble-tumble economy, and you wonder how you're going to provide for yourself or your family next year. Or perhaps relations with those close to you are strained, and your heart is crying out for some peace and the simple joys of life.

There are other gifts—gifts from Someone who loves you—that can never be found in a store. Though they are invaluable, they cannot be bought with money. In fact, they are free! These gifts are designed by God, our heavenly Father; they are gifts of love, joy, peace, and happiness.

The reason we celebrate Christmas at all is because God gave us the greatest gift anyone could give—His Son, Jesus. Though Jesus came into the world as a tiny baby, He brought with Him all of God's wonderful gifts. As He grew older, He unwrapped these gifts for us, one by one, by teaching us how to love God and each other. Then, when Jesus died for us, He gave us the greatest gift of all—freedom from fear of death, and a promise of eternal life in heaven when our time on earth is done.

The world is becoming such a hard, cold place to live, and sometimes it may seem that God's love is too far away to touch your heart. The wonderful truth is that God is waiting for you, His arms full of gifts, and all you have to do is ask Him for them. Each gift has your name written on the tag, because God sent His Son to earth so that you could receive the gift of everlasting life.

If you haven't yet experienced Jesus' beautiful love, the heart and soul of Christmas, you can now by inviting Him into your heart and life. You can pray a prayer like this:

*Jesus, I thank You for the amazing love You have shown by coming to earth and dying on the cross for me. I want to celebrate this Christmas together with You. I want to know You personally, to receive Your love and Your gift of eternal life. Please touch my life with Your love and help me to share that love with others.*

May God bless you with the best Christmas ever!