



December 2018

What are you waiting for?

I have a clear childhood memory of standing in our scullery drying up on Christmas Eve and literally feeling I would burst with the anticipation feeling the paper rustling in my Christmas stocking the next morning. It was a physical feeling of near agony! I wonder what your children or even you are waiting for this Christmas?

Waiting to put up the tree and decorations, hang up Christmas stockings, to see family and friends, to eat and drink all the things you may avoid during the year?...or at least, more of them!!! Often anticipation is better than the actual event isn't it? Or is that me in my jaded near old age? All those romantic songs and films about Christmas, "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas" or "Chestnuts roasting on an open fire"...white snow means "Baby it's cold outside" and maybe cold inside, away from the fire and who laid it anyway? Who chopped the wood, or filled the coal scuttle? Who will clear out the grate and dust the sooty mantelpiece? And films always end in a kiss, or a glowing loving family appreciating wonderful gifts....Oh sorry, this **is** real life - is it only me that is not living the dream???

I sound so cynical but actually, I love Christmas - well parts of it.

Maybe it is about expectation. In my childhood we didn't have many extras as I came from a big family and mum and dad fostered in days where you got very little financial reward, so everything was shared. But I loved Christmas and everything about it. It was such a together time. We played daft games and stayed up late and ate crisps! The only thing I hated were the crackers and I would go and stand in the "middle room" which was cold and where the Christmas cake mum iced on Christmas Eve was stored, waiting for the bangs to finish. But I was a child and I have no idea of the worries and stresses mum and dad may well have been under and that is good as childhood lasts such a few short years.

The ancient people of Israel were waiting. They were waiting for and anticipating a Messiah. They would tell their children stories of their ancestors rescued from the oppressive rule of the Egyptians into their Promised Land years earlier (maybe round an open fire). They would talk of the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Isaiah: "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Now they were waiting and longing to be rescued from the oppressive rule of the Roman Empire. Over the years, signs pointed to what the Messiah might be like and where he might come but of course, when he did come,

they hardly noticed. The king came, the rescuer, the redeemer, the Messiah but many missed it, despite their waiting, their anticipating.

I wonder if the Messiah, God, the rescuer, comes to us and we don't notice. I wonder what you are waiting for?

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