

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

December 27, 2009

the Rev. Ken Kroohs

[\(Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 147; Galatians 3:23 & 4:4-7; John 1:1-18\)](#)

**IS THAT ALL THERE IS ?**

St. Christopher's Episcopal Church, High Point, NC

MAY THE WORDS OF MY MOUTH ... AND THE MEDITATIONS OF  
ALL OUR HEARTS ... BE ALWAYS ACCEPTABLE TO YOU \_\_\_\_  
OUR STRENGTH AND OUR REDEEMER AMEN

Christmas Eve I told you about my grand kids asking the great question "why?" .... And how we should continue to ask that question, even about Jesus. Why was He born? Why did He die? I suggested that the answer is that God choose to do things that way so we understood how much God cares for us. Copies of the sermon will be on the website.

Today I want to use my grand kids again – surprise, surprise – but this time more of an attitude than a statement. The attitude: ----- is that all there is? .... Aren't there more presents for me?

No matter how many they get there is a point when the last one is opened

and they ask: "Is that all there is?"

Question – have you ever had that feeling? Not necessarily about material presents, but about Christmas? Post-Christmas depression is so common there must be some fancy Latin phrase for it! People getting depressed as they ask: "Is that all there is?"

Sometimes that comes from sadness over a lack of family or friends. Maybe the family and friends left, or maybe they never arrived, or maybe they don't exist. Any of those situations can generate serious depression.

But I suspect that for many people the feeling is much deeper and even more important. We tend to build up Christmas as a time when Jesus comes into our world, into our lives. Like a child so excited about getting a pony, but never gets it. ... we build up the expectations and then feel

disappointed.

This is not usually a conscious thing. In fact I suspect that if anyone spoke about the coming arrival of Jesus into our lives we would at best pass it off, and very possibly argue - saying He is already part of our lives.

True - but MAYBE, just maybe Jesus is part of our lives like the child's plastic, toy pony. Maybe Jesus' role in our lives is not much more than that toy pony's role in the child's life. Maybe like the child wants a real pony, we want a real relationship with Jesus - and are sad when it doesn't magically appear in our Christmas stockings ... so we wonder, "is that all there is?" ... we fear we should stop hoping for more.

Maybe like the child who eventually gives up asking, much less expecting a real pony we give up expecting a real relationship with

God. Maybe like the child who will always have that secret desire for a pony – a desire they will not even admit to and just convince themselves to go on with life as is ... we will hide away our desire for a relationship and just convince ourselves to take what we have and go on with life – as it is.

Maybe we deep down inside wonder - "Is that all there is?" and out of fear that **is** all there is we stop asking for more.

I guess we should not be shocked at this. Wondering if God exists, or even more commonly if God cares is a very human activity. When we look around the world, when we see the pain, when we feel the pain it is not difficult to wonder. When a good friend dies, alone, we wonder.

Of course when we see the joy, the beauty, the excitement we usually fail to consider where that comes from! I

suspect we hurt God when we notice the evil but forget to acknowledge the good.

Most importantly I suspect we deeply pain God when we wonder "is that all there is?" without trying to find more. The child's pony is in the front yard but they will not open the door to go see it. The child even looks out the window, sees the pony, but refuse to open the door. **What more do they – we want?**

What more do we want? .... John reminds us that the world was created by God, through Jesus – but the world knew Him not. John reminds us that Jesus want to the trouble to come to us, and we did not accept Him. .... And don't tell me that was some Jews 2,000 years ago! I submit to you that description is just as true for us today – Jesus comes to us and we do not accept Him – we look the other way, we ignore Him, we shut our ears. If that was not true this would be a

much nicer world!

What we have is not all there is. What we have is all we are willing to accept. What we have is not all God wants us to have but all we will take.

The greater relationship is like those presents under the tree. Until we are willing to take off the wrapping we won't know what is in them ... we won't be able to enjoy them.

Shirley gave me an Ipod for Christmas. Until it was unwrapped, the box opened, and then she put content on it, loaded the songs on it the Ipod was just a hunk of metal .. a theory ... a wish.

Jesus gave us the relationship but until we are willing to spend the effort to unwrap it ... by learning more about God it is nothing. Until we are willing to open the present given us by God ... open it by doing the ministries God gives us ... it is

nothing. Until we are willing to load it with content of prayer and reflection - it is just an empty container.

So it is our choice ... Is that all there is? Or is there more for us? If we want it to be more we spend out efforts learning about working for,

Yesterday I learned something ... learned it again ... If we want to have that relationship with God **now** is the time.

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