

A BETTER GIFT WRAPPER THAN I AM

Gift wrapping is not my strong suit. My wife Nadine knows this very well and as a result whenever she needs help wrapping gifts, she seeks my daughter's assistance rather than mine. My daughter knows this about me too and can easily spot if the gift she is opening has been wrapped by me.

I don't know what it is with me and wrapping. I cannot tell you the number of times I have cut the paper and pulled the ends across the gift only to discover that it is too short. I am not very good either when it comes to wrapping the ends of gifts. So many times, I find myself having left too much paper at each end and having a tough time making the corners tight. Sometimes I will cut off some excess from each end and end up having made the wrapping job look worse than better.

This year my gift wrapping has not started well. Nadine asked for some help wrapping a gift for one of the clients she cleans for. My daughter was not up yet so I decided to be helpful. Sure enough, my first attempt was too short. The second time the piece of paper was too long. When I tried to fix the situation, I ended up poking a hole in the paper. I decided the best thing I could do was look for a gift bag.

We did not have any of the proper size, so I decided to make a quick visit to the Dollar Store. When I went down the aisle looking for gift bags, I came upon another man standing there. As soon as I approached him it was almost as if we could tell we shared the same problem of struggling when it comes to gift wrapping. I confessed my weakness with him, and he shared a story or two with me. He admitted that he was also not very good when it came to wrapping his kids in diapers. For some reason I was a lot better at wrapping diapers than gifts. We wished each other a Merry Christmas after swapping stories, knowing our lives would be a lot easier over these next few days if we stuck with gift bags.

As I drove off from the Dollar Store, I found myself reminded of the wrapping that took place after Jesus' birth. Luke tells us in his gospel:

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her first child, a son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger because there was no lodging available for them. (Luke 2:6-7)

The practice of wrapping a baby in strips of cloth after their birth was done to keep them warm and provide them with a sense of security. These clothes were believed to protect the baby's internal organs as well. Even

though Mary provided a gift to the baby Jesus by wrapping Him in these strips of cloths, we know God wrapped this gift up for us first by sending us our Savior. This reminder got me thinking about how God has wrapped up so many gifts to provide us with warmth in our hearts and a feeling of security. The gifts He has wrapped might include:

- **Times when He wrapped His arms around us reminding us of His love,**
- **Answers to prayers that remind us of His faithfulness and care,**
- **Moments when we have sensed His presence and felt reassured,**
- **Hearing words from Scripture or a sermon that fill our hearts with faith and trust,**
- **Daily blessings that when added up help us to realize how active God is in our lives.**

This Christmas let us take time to look at the many gifts God wraps up for us to bless our hearts and souls with warmth and security. The more we take time to reflect upon this, the more we will come to realize that when it comes to wrapping gifts, nobody does it better than our all-loving God.

I hope that each and every one of us will have a merry and blessed Christmas. I also hope that I have enough gift bags to make my wrapping duties much easier.

Keep safe and God bless,

Pastor Dean