

**Dec. 16/07 Give A Tree For Christmas Matt. 2:9-12; 2 Cor. 9:6-10; Rev. 22:1-5**

**It's hard to select just the right thing when it comes to buying something for some one, isn't it? Sandi and I like to go to Chapters to relax over a coffee from Starbucks. They have various gourmet drinks, e.g. latte, cappuccino, moccacino. Some times, I've said to my wife, "What would you like?" She has said, "Surprise me." So after I bring her my choice, she has said, "That's not the right thing." Did you hear about the guy who asked his wife what she wanted for Christmas? She said, "Surprise me." So at three o'clock in the morning he leaned over and said, "Boo!" right in her ear. That's what she got for Christmas and she still isn't speaking to him, apparently.**

**Actually, the very best gift you can give for Christmas is a miracle tree. The cross is referred to in the Bible as a tree. So when we share the Gospel, we give the best gift we can give. If you want to enjoy a super Christmas, the best way is to give as much as you possibly can, for when we give we not only minister to those in need, but we also demonstrate the love of God in Christ. Are you going to give some one a miracle for Christmas?**

#### **I/ A WONDERFUL EXAMPLE**

**Bob and Natalie Abraham live in Hammonds Plains, N.S. This year, they have decided to forego giving one another Christmas presents and instead use the money to give a needy family a miracle tree for Christmas through World Vision. We will look at what a miracle tree is in a moment. Natalie says, "The best thing we can do is to give it to those in need because that brings Christmas right back to what the true meaning is for us." (They still give gifts to the children.) She says when she was growing up, her grandma always taught her, "What you give away, you will never miss." I was very pleased to discover in the newspaper article reporting this story that thousands of Nova Scotians actually give fifty per cent more than the average Canadian. Certainly a great example of the spirit of the season.**

#### **II/ THE MIRACLE TREE**

**The miracle tree is actually a moringa tree, an ancient tree that was discovered in India. Its nutritional and healing properties are now being harnessed by relief organizations such as World Vision. I am reminded that the cross of Christ is referred to as a tree in the Bible. "He took upon Himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung upon a tree." Gal. 3:13 NLT In the Gospel of John chapter fifteen, Jesus describes Himself as a tree. "I am the Vine. You are the branches." As the Holy Spirit flows through each branch, it bears fruit. The Bible opens with a description of the tree of life in the Garden of Eden and it closes with a picture of the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations in the new Jerusalem. Rev. 22:1-5 Lets take a look at the properties of the moringa tree and compare them to the properties of the cross of Christ.**

**1. THE MORINGA TREE IS A REAL TREE It is not an artificial tree. There are two kinds of Christmas trees, real and artificial. Some people prefer an artificial**

tree for reasons of safety and convenience. Others want a real tree. My wife and I met some one in a local restaurant who had driven to a tree farm in our community to collect their real tree. They love the fragrance filling the house. The cross of the Son of God brings us the experience of real life in Christ. It does not offer the artificiality of religion which says, "I must work my way into heaven by being a good person, giving to a church and doing good deeds." The Lord did not come to bring a new religion. He said, "I am the Way, the Truth and the LIFE. No one comes to the Father but by Me." He also said, "I came that they might have life and have it until it overflows." Jn. 10:10 AMP

**2. THE MORINGA THRIVES IN ARID PLACES** Amazingly, the moringa tree does not need much water to survive. It can even survive on the dishwasher a family disposes of each day. More importantly, it even has the ability to provide water in drought stricken regions. The Gospel tree brings the water of life to the thirsty heart. The Lord said, "Whoever hungers and THIRSTS for righteousness will be filled." "Whoever is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Out of his inner being will flow rivers of living water."

### **3. THE MORINGA TREE ACTS A NUTRITIONAL FOOD SOURCE**

The moringa tree's leaves can be eaten fresh, cooked or dried in the form of ground powder. It has been called "nutritional dynamite" because of its vitamins and antioxidants. Studies have revealed the following statistics.

- A. The leaves have three times the calcium in milk.
- B. More potassium than bananas.
- C. Two times the iron in spinach.
- D. Seven times the vitamin C in an orange.
- E. Four times the vitamin A in carrots.
- F. Twice the protein in milk.

No wonder consideration is being given to including moringa as a food additive in North America and Europe!

Did you know the cross of Christ feeds the soul with nutritional dynamite as well? That's right. Jesus Christ said, "Whoever HUNGERS and thirsts for righteousness will be filled." "I am the living Bread that came down from heaven." He will feed you on His presence and satisfy your hungry heart like nothing else on earth can.

**4. THE MORINGA TREE EXUDES A WONDERFUL OIL** Actually, its oil is called Ben oil, and has healing properties similar to olive oil. In the Bible, oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. David experienced the presence of God in a mighty way, writing, "You anoint my head with oil." Ps. 23 The believer is depicted as a branch that is attached to the tree of Christ. As the Holy Spirit flows through the branches, the fruit of love, joy, peace, love, gentleness, kindness, meekness, faith and patience begin to manifest. See Jn. 15 Lets think of the fruit of joy for a moment, as Christmas is the season of joy. There are many this Christmas who are trying to find happiness in the gifts they receive, enjoyment of the holidays and their pleasant surroundings. But joy is different than happiness. Happiness depends on

happenings. It is a slave to circumstances. On the other hand, joy is deep down in the soul, constant, stable and growing in the believer's heart regardless of the circumstances. The Bible speaks of God giving us the oil of His joy or gladness in the soul. The first psalm in the Bible depicts the believer as a healthy, green tree, planted by the water, growing deep roots. It is thriving in every way and bringing forth a crop of fruit in season. Psalms one is an excellent description of the God blessed life in Christ.

**5. THE MORINGA PROVIDES MEDICINAL HEALING** Its leaves are full of vitamins, antioxidants and antibacterial agents. But the Gospel tree provides a healing deeper than any medicine can offer. It heals the soul from the crippling disease of sin that separates us from God. It sets us free from the curse of death and decay. It brings us wholeness in Christ Jesus. "By His stripes you are healed." The Bible closes the way it began, with a description of the tree of life providing healing for the nations. See Rev. 22:1-5

**6. THE MORINGA COMBATS POVERTY** This tree actually provides a family with the means to make a little money. Its fibers can be used to make rope which can be sold in the market place. In Christ, we have a rope of hope called faith. By faith, we seize hold of the promises of God and experience all that God has in store for us.

**7. THE MORINGA IS A LIVING MIRACLE** No wonder they call it a miracle tree. This Christmas, the Abrahams are giving a needy family a miracle. How about you? Are you giving some one a miracle? It need not be a miracle tree. It could be a simple act of kindness, a card, a gift, a phone call or a meal. You could give a Gospel tree for Christmas by telling some one about Christ and what He did for them. Or you could invite that person to a church event this Christmas where they could hear the real reason for the season.

### **III/ WHAT YOU GIVE AWAY, YOU WILL NEVER MISS**

That's what Natalie's grandma always told her. Giving is a way of life for the Abrahams. They even host pot luck suppers in support of World Vision projects. Their children are even getting into the act, raising money throughout the year for World Vision projects through lemonade and ice cream stands. The apostle Paul echoed this sentiment. "The one who plants generously will get a generous crop. ..Godly people give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will never be forgotten." 2 Cor. 9:6, 9 However, many Christians do not seem to understand this message. Why is that? I would suggest the following reasons.

- A. We are influenced by our culture of greed, accumulationism and materialism.
- B. We fear that we will not have enough if we give away too much.
- C. Actually, the above consideration is a commentary on our view of God. That belief suggests we do not trust God with our finances, to do what He said He would do. He said to bring the whole tithe into the storehouse and He would pour out so much blessing on us that we would not be able to contain it all. In effect, God says, "If you will pay My bills, I will pay your bills." See MalachI chapter three.

#### **IV/ DEVELOP AN EYE FOR OPPORTUNITY**

**Let me share a true story with you about the city of Seattle in the United States. In the late eighteen hundreds, an economic depression swept through Canada and the United States, as industrialization caused a population shift from rural areas into the cities. Poverty and disease were rampant. It is no wonder when the Klondike Gold Rush began in the eighteen nineties that desperate men headed north to find gold. The city of Seattle was particularly hard hit as it had experienced a devastating fire in 1889 which devastated the business section of the city. There were few jobs and very little commerce. Then some one on the Chamber of Commerce came up with a genius of an idea. The idea was to get people to start thinking of Seattle as their point of embarkation for the Klondike. The Chamber of Commerce decided to do everything in its power to market the city as the place to go to begin your Klondike adventure. On August 30, 1897, they formed the Bureau of Information, the purpose of which was to circulate information as widely as possible on the benefits of coming to Seattle to begin your Klondike adventure. This was in the days before the Internet. The attempt at marketing the city as a preferred destination worked. Businesses sprouted up, stocking equipment and supplies that miners would need. The city even had a gold assaying office set up to weigh and exchange gold for cash. As would be miners arrived in droves, the city of Seattle rebounded from its devastating setback, all because some one had an eye for opportunity.**

**If you want to both give some one the best Christmas ever and enjoy the best Christmas ever, you will need an eye for opportunity. The Bible says, “God is the One who provides seed to the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, He will give you many opportunities to do good, and He will produce a great harvest of generosity in you.” 2 Cor. 9:10 Christmas is a season in which opportunities abound. We just need to open our eyes to see them, our ears to hear them coming, our hearts to respond and our hands to seize precious moments for giving. Are you going to give some one a miracle for Christmas?**

**Dec. 16/07 A Word From Pastor Alan**

**Have you heard about the moringa tree, also referred to as the “miracle tree?” I heard of it when the newspaper reported the story of a couple who were forgoing Christmas presents to one another in order to give a miracle tree to a family in need. The tree is referred to as a miracle tree because of its ability to provide a source of water, a supply of food, antioxidants for healing and a means to combat poverty. Relief organizations such as World Vision have been working to get the trees into the hands of the world’s poor in places like Africa. If you go on the internet, and just google, “Miracle Tree As Food Source,” you can learn much more.**

**I am reminded that the Gospel of Jesus Christ provides all of these things for the hurting heart. Jesus Christ offers us living water to nourish the soul, the bread of His presence to feed our soul, healing from the effects of sin through His blood shed on Calvary and a means to combat our spiritual poverty. He said, “I came that they**

**might have life and have it until it overflows.” Jn. 10:10 AMP**

**This Christmas, we can give some one a miracle tree by recounting the story of what Christ did for us on the cross of Calvary. We can demonstrate His love through our simple acts of kindness. Would you like to experience a miracle this Christmas? Then please go to the sermon on this site.**