

A Place in Church

Fresh on the heels of the celebration of Christmas – the story about the birth of Christ in a stable and His placement in a manger – it is important to be reminded that He grew and fulfilled the mission for which He was sent. The following story was shared with me; its author is not known, but its message is impactful:

One day a man went to visit a church. He got there early, parked his car, and got out. Another car pulled up and the driver got out and said, “I always park there! You took my place.”

The visitor went inside for Sunday School, found an empty seat and sat down. A young lady from the church approached him and stated, “That’s my seat! You took my place.”

The visitor was somewhat distressed by this rude welcome, but said nothing. After Sunday School, the visitor went into the sanctuary and sat down. Another member walked up to him and said, “That’s where I always sit! You took my place.”

The visitor was even more troubled by this treatment, but still said nothing. Later, as the congregation was praying for Christ to dwell among them, the visitor stood up, and his appearance began to change. Horrible scars became visible on his hands and on his sandaled feet. Someone from the congregation noticed him and called out, “What happened to you?”

The visitor replied, as his hat became a thorn of crowns, and a tear fell from his eye, “I took your place.”

This modern-day parable speaks of the amazing love of Christ for us, and highlights the real meaning of Christmas.

--Beecher Hunter