

The Promise of Togetherness

The late David Niven was a British actor and novelist. He wrote a true story about his experience on Christmas Eve in 1939.

He had just arrived in England from Hollywood to volunteer for the British Army. Having had previous military experience, Niven was commissioned a second lieutenant and given command of a platoon.

The group was sent to France, and no one was very happy about what was then called “the phony war,” or having to be away from friends and family at Christmas.

Even worse for the men of this unit was the irritating fact that they were commanded by a Hollywood actor! As Niven wrote, “The men were not mutinous, but they were certainly 40 of the least well-disposed characters I ever have been associated with, let alone been in command of.”

No leave was permitted on Christmas Eve because the unit might well see action the next day. The entire platoon was billeted in the shabby stables of a country farm. It so happened that Niven, every night of his life, took the moment before going to bed to kneel down and offer a simple prayer to God.

But that night, he was faced with a difficult decision. If he suddenly knelt in prayer here in front of an already hostile group of men, wouldn't those already disgruntled soldiers see that as just one more act of Hollywood flamboyance? On the other hand, Niven had been thinking all day about Christ coming into the world, and his heart simply would not let him go to bed without thanking God for that wondrous gift.

Summoning up his courage, he knelt there in the barn and began to pray quietly. There was some snickering at first, but it soon died away.

When he finished, Niven lay down on the straw and looked rather sheepishly around the stable where he saw every man in the unit on his knees in prayer.

It was not the first time that God entered a stable – and touched the hearts of people with peace and togetherness.

These are the realities that the prophet Isaiah could see in the coming of the Messiah: Christmas judgment, Christmas changes, and Christmas togetherness.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 35:10 NKJV).

(more)

It is almost as if Isaiah could foresee a drawing together of people, a coming home again, a time when the walls that divide us would be taken down, and the people of the world would know a harmony and togetherness never known before.

As you prepare once more for the Lord's coming, be sure you make time for the realities in Christmas that can change your life now and for all time.

– Beecher Hunter

