



The Present of Presence

Setting: Christmas Eve, daughter can't get to sleep Christmas overload, can't calm down enough to go to bed

Girl: Mom, I can't go to sleep

Mom: I know it's Christmas Eve Sweetie, but the faster you get to sleep, the sooner Christmas morning will get here.

Girl: I know I know I'm just not tired, and I can't stop thinking about all those presents!

Mom: Okay, well come out here and sit with me for a minute. Let's talk!

(Girl comes out with PJs, blanket, stuffed animals, ponytails, tries to sit on mom's lap)

Girl: Yeah! Thank you Mommy.

Mom: *(groans)* Don't you think you're a little big to be sitting on my lap? Why don't you move over here. So what are you thinking about so hard that you can't relax and get to sleep?

Girl: I can't wait to see all of my presents. Those boxes have been driving me crazy!

Mom: You know Christmas isn't all about the presents under the tree, right?

Girl: I know I know. But, in Sunday School we learned "in presents is fullness of joy." That's in the Bible, Mom. And I know that sometimes presents are hidden away in the secret place. Presents make us exceedingly glad.

Mom: Uhhh...I don't think that means what you think it means, Sweetie!

Girl: Well I know this, tomorrow I am going to have gladness and singing when I come downstairs into all the presents. And don't forget, the Bible also says that That fathers know how to give good presents to their children. Maybe you'll have some good presents too!

Mom: Uhh...let's back up a little bit here. Now, are you saying "presence" or "presents"?

Girl: Well, obviously, "PRESENTS" (animated)

Mom: Have you ever hears of a homonym?

Girl: (*pondering*) Yes, that is an ingredient you use when you make pasole, right

Mom: No, you're thinking of "hominy." The word is "homonym." It is when two words sound the same, but have totally different meanings and maybe even different spellings.

Girl: Well, spelling is my best subject Mommy.

Mom: Ok good. So there is the word "presence" spelled p-r-e-s-e-n-c-e. For example, you left your bedroom and came into my presence tonight. We're together. Understand?

Girl: I think so. You're saying there is a present in here for me--a Christmas Eve present! (*starts looking under mom's chair*)

Mom: No, you are talking about the other word "presents" spelled p-r-e-s-e-n-t-s, which are gifts given from one to another.

Girl: Ok, and....I love talking about gifts. In fact, we read a verse last week that perfectly describes my feelings about that. Mom, I am zealous for gifts!

Mom: Do you even know what zealous means?

Girl: Not exactly, but I am that if it means I love and desire the best gifts. That's in the Bible too. Mom, you should pay more attention in church. Even you should be zealous for gifts like I am, and desiring the best ones.

Mom: I do pay attention in church, but I think we need get our Bible and our dictionary out.

Girl: Oh no...Please don't tell me you bought me a dictionary for Christmas. Can't we just Google it?

Mom: (*gets Bible out*) Let's start here. You know this verse--what does John 3:16 say?

Girl: I know that one really well. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son..."

Mom: Stop here. So God gave Jesus to the world as a "present"

Girl: He didn't wrap Him up, did He?

Mom: Well, sort of. The Bible tells us he was wrapped in swaddling clothes after He was born. And remember how the wise men came and brought Him gifts or “presents” of

Girl: I know, I know! Gold, frankfurters, and mirrors.

Mom: Close.-They brought gold, frankincense and myrrh. And yes, those were “presents” p-r-e-s-e-n-t-s. But what is most important about this story is that the shepherds and the wisemen were in the “presence” p-r-e-s-e-n-c-e of Jesus. That’s what I am trying to explain to you. It is a significant difference. Do you understand?

Girl: So when the Bible says “in presence is fullness of joy” it’s not talking about the Barbie Dream House that you have hiding the top of the closet?

Mom: What!! Stay out of my closet. You’re right, it is not talking about any of those gifts under the tree or what may or may not be in my closet. But the meaning of Christmas is that God has sent His Son as a gift to us so that we could believe in Him and have everlasting life, and our joy comes from being in the “presence” of the Lord--being near Him.

Girl: ohhh...So it’s like when Grandma comes to our house tomorrow, she will bring me a present (and maybe it will be a puppy!!), but because she comes here, I can can enjoy her presences and her presents. I like getting her present, but I really like playing games and baking, and reading stories and taking walks with Grandma when she comes.

Mom: I think you are understanding better now. So those Bible verses you were telling me about are talking about being close to Jesus all the time and not about the gifts under our tree. (girl makes a big yawn) We can be glad in His presence, we can have fullness of joy in His presence, thanksgiving, singing, refreshing--all in His presence. (girl is getting drowsy and leans onto Mom’s lap)

Mom: Sweet dreams, Sweetie. Tomorrow we will enjoy our presents under the tree and, most of all, His presence.