



Sunday, 12/18/16

NO GREATER LOVE

READING: John 3:16-17; 15:12-17

Christmas is special because of Easter, our Father's two great gifts. The first portion of the reading, John's Gospel lays out with the efficiency of a strategic planner, the Ends, Ways and Means of our redemption. Out of love God sacrifices. Willman C. Dix's Hymn "What Child Is This?" in three verses reverently lifts up God's Christmas – Easter plan, ending in our present as a verse encourages, "...Let loving hearts enthrone Him..." God's love in this hymn, especially verse 2 pierces my heart, try as I might, I cannot complete its singing.

Much of my life I've sought ways to mirror God's sacrifice with my own sacrifice. In the end my sacrifices were not good enough. Finally, my heart awakened as I read Psalm 51 with new eyes. I saw in verses 16 and 17 my folly and answer. As I opened up to my brokenness, I also became aware. There are awesome songs about brokenness, but it gets better for me. A Brother introduced me to the Japanese art form known as Kintsugi or as Kintsukuroi. The analogy of Kintsukuroi art as Christ's redemption, the repair of my broken life, was instant and liberating. No longer in the shadows, Christ's love makes my scars obviously beautiful by His "golden" repair. The Potter restores His clay.

The last portion of the reading is Jesus' command for us to, "...love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends..." There are limits to what I understand, to what I can do. Praise God, Paul enumerated Christ's love in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, and 13. In these verses I see places for me to grow, even if by baby steps. The two exclamation points cause me to see my effort to grow is worth it. Paul writes as fact, verse 8, "Love never ends..." and verse 13, "...the greatest of these is love." Here, is work for me to do. As I have breath, I can work, I can willingly surrender to love and receive His gift of NO GREATER LOVE. Such a rare, beautify gift.

– Randy Schroeder