

*...the greatest joy seems to flow  
from sharing the moment...*



*“I no longer call you servants, because a  
servant does not know his master’s  
business. Instead, I have called you  
friends, for everything that I learned from  
my Father I have made known to you.”  
John 15:15*

During this too often bustling and harried time that is the holiday season, I occasionally remember to pause, not nearly often enough, to contemplate how richly blessed I am to be surrounded by loving family and friends. I also gratefully marvel that Jesus came into this world in human form, not only for our salvation, but to give us another Christmas gift: His friendship.

My yearning for His friendship is always heightened during the Christmas season because I get to see this world through the lenses of friendships old and new. I am blessed to work with a group here in Malibu that annually hosts a Christmas party for underprivileged children. This group is largely populated with big-hearted, often grumpy, senior gentlemen who eagerly anticipate this party each year.

Earlier this month we hosted 60 children from grades 1 through 5 at a Malibu beach club for an afternoon of food, fun, and fellowship. The children arrive from a less privileged area not terribly far from Malibu, yet many of them have never seen the ocean. There is trepidation in their eyes when they catch sight of the grumbling guys preparing for the party. They quickly relax as they are personally greeted and then are feted with a hot dog and ice cream lunch. We sing Christmas carols together, strain to search the water just past the surf line for pods of dolphin, and are treated with a special visit from Santa Claus bearing gifts for all. The children laugh, giggle, become wide-eyed silent when Santa appears, and hug their gifts while loudly and joyfully expressing their unabashed gratitude for all that they received and experienced. The senior chaps dab at their glistening eyes and pretend to cough as their joy is also manifest to all. And the greatest joy seems to flow from sharing the moment with one another – sharing among old and new friends.

I wonder at how God brings together disparate grumpy guys and young children and quickly bonds them in warm friendship based upon our common humanity. This tender celebration of friendship reminds me, what better friend could we have than Jesus? He is steadfastly loyal. He forgives our every fault. He supports and encourages us when we need it most, and He listens whenever we want to talk.

What a great friend we have – Merry Christmas to all!

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