

CHRISTMAS, AND NO BIG GIFTS

A Children's Story for
the worship hour.

Written: Dec. 9, 1961.

Dates & places used:

Dec. 10, 1961, Montrose, Colo.

Christmas was coming; but somehow things just didn't seem right to Billy Blue. Billy was 8, and he could remember quite a few things about life before his Daddy went into the Army and they moved to a southern California town so the family could stay together.

They had lived in a small town far enough north to have snow every winter. Usually Christmas really was a white Christmas back home. Butn here it was just a few days before Christmas, and there was no sign of snow. Worse than that, people told Billy that there never was snow. So it just didn't seem right to Billy that it was so close to Christmas.

Something evern worse than that made things not seem right for Christmas, too. At home theyx had always spent some time with Mother or

Daddy going from store to store to buy gifts for Himmy and Linda, his brother and sister, and for cousins back east. This year they had gotten some very small, cheap, gifts for Linda and Jimmy, and had sent only cards to the cousins, Aunts, Uncles, and grandparents. The Christmas tree was only a small one this year, which they had bought downtown for 75¢ a foot, and was nowhere near as nice as the big one they used to get off a farm back home each year. The pile of gifts under the tree wasn't much of a pile, either; and Mother and Daddy had told Billy, ~~Jimmy~~ and Linda that there would be no big gifts this year. So here it was just a few days before Christmas, and to Billy it hardly seemed like Christmas at all.

Besides that, his brother Jimmy, who was older than Billy, was in the hospital. In fact, Billy hadn't seen Jimmy in several weeks, because the hospital was in another city quite a distance away, and children Billy's age weren't let in to see people there. Before Jimmy went to the hospital Billy had noticed that

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Jimmy just wasn't as interested in playing, or even in fighting, and that he didn't seem to care about things much. And just the other day Billy's mother hugged him tight and told him that Jimmy had a brain tumor and would have to have an operation, and even that might not save his life.

Billy's father had said that because of all the extra expense because of Jimmy's sickness, and because the Army pay wasn't as good as they had been getting back home, they just couldn't buy big gifts this year. Billy's mother said that the really big gift this year ~~would~~ which they should hope for would be Jimmy getting well.

So it just didn't seem like near Christmas to Billy. No snow, no big Christmas tree, no Jimmy to play or fight with, and no big gifts under the tree. And my, how he missed Jimmy.

Billy's Mother and Daddy told him to ask God to give Jimmy back to them well, and he did this every night as part of his bedtime prayers.

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On Christmas Eve morning Daddy said he was going to see Jimmy at the hospital, and he might not be home for Christmas day. Billy really cried then. No big gifts, and not even Daddy.

On Christmas morning Mother and Linda and Billy decided not to open any gifts until Daddy got home, even if it was a day or two yet. At noon when they sat down to eat, it was a sort of gloomy Christmas dinner. Just as they closed their eyes to say the blessing, the front door opened suddenly. They looked up startled, and there was Daddy, carrying Jimmy in his arms. Even though he looked weak still, Jimmy was smiling and alert like he used to be. Daddy said, "here's our big Christmas gift," and Mother started crying. As for Billy, somehow he was so glad that he felt happier than he ever did when they had had lots of big gifts under the Christmas tree back home.

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and Daddy prayed. Billy sort of felt like he and Linda and Mother all knew what Daddy meant when he prayed:

"Father, we thank you for helping Jimmy get well so he could be with us on this Christmas. Although unlike many people, we have no big gifts under the tree, we are happier today than if we did. We can understand the joy of all the world at Christmas over the child whose parents were so poor that he was born in a stable, but who brought peace and joy to many people. We thank you for our big gift today, Jimmy, and for Jesus, the biggest gift of all the world. Bless this food to our strength, that we may always love each other, and that we may love and serve thee best. In Jesus name. Amen.

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