

# Interrupted...by Love

by Rev Dan Balsdon, 20th December 2020 | read online at  
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**Where have you found love this year?  
How are you sharing love today?**

2020 has been a different year to how any of us had imagined it would be back in January. And Christmas 2020 is no different - Christmas is going to be different this year.

The story is told of a Dad who called a family conference. He'd decided their Christmas was going to be different. They had been getting carried away with frivolous festivities. And so he told them, they were to be more disciplined, Cutting down on excessive spending on gifts. they were going make sure there was a better atmosphere between visiting relatives. His speech came to a crescendo with a final rallying cry – let's make this the best Christmas ever!

After a few moments of quiet, the youngest son nervously spoke up – “but Dad, I don't see how we can ever improve on the first Christmas”<sup>i</sup>

I think many of us are aware how we can sometimes get caught up in what we could call the culture of Christmas – the commercial call to buy as many presents as we can, to stock the kitchen to the hilt, to spend time with family and friends, eating together, playing games together...

Familiarity can sometimes breed complacency. And this year I wonder whether the fact we are having to think more carefully about how we spend Christmas might cut into the familiarity, and make us think more carefully about what Christmas is really about.

Because let's face it, pandemic aside, we shouldn't need an excuse to spend time with family and friends, to give gifts to one another to show our love and care for them. This should be a normal part of life as human beings, created to be in relationship with one another.

Christmas is about something more important. Something no matter of family conference can improve on. Something no restrictions can take away. Christmas is not, cannot be, cancelled.

Because at Christmas we celebrate the world being interrupted by a gift of love. Because God shows his love for us through the life of Jesus, who as Christians we believe demonstrates true love to us, welcoming the outcast, caring for the stranger, loving us for who we are.

Advent is a time of watching and waiting – leading us to Christmas when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. But Advent is also a time of realising what we are watching and waiting for is already with us. Jesus is already here. And is a gift of limitless love for us.

I don't know about you, but sometimes when I get a gift at Christmas, or get a Christmas card in the post, I feel a bit bad if I've not sent them a gift or card. I want to reciprocate – to give back – and I feel it's not fair.

Well God's gift of Jesus isn't fair either – because God gives and gives, and doesn't expect anything from us, just to receive. We call it grace. God giving when we don't think we deserve it, and expecting nothing of us except to receive it.

***For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.***

*Ephesians 2:8*

In this year of interruption,  
This Christmas interrupted,  
May your life be interrupted... by God's gift of love.

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<sup>i</sup> Story adapted from A stocking Full of Christmas, J John