

## Ransom Notes

### Thirteen Days After Christmas

#### Are We Really Ready for 2024?

Packages are unwrapped accompanied by cheers and thanks. Sweaters too large and unwanted toys are returned to the store. Silver bells and twinkling lights are hidden away for another three hundred plus days. Left-over turkey and cranberries provided tasty snacks for 'starving' teens with only turkey soup remaining for dinner tonight. Hopefully not too many bills stare you in the face. Yes, the 2023 celebration of Christ's birthday is a memory. What now?

Anticipation of living another 365 days, caused this writer to dash to the card shop and buy her greeting cards at a discount. My theory is, think ahead and save a few green backs. Recycled gift bags, bows, and tissue paper are popped into a large box and stored. I hate to waste, so sorry friends. If the bow on your 2024 gift is a bit wrinkled, it might be second hand, even though wrapping is very important to me.

When I think the Lord was wrapped in swaddling clothes, I doubt that Mary and Joseph paid too much for his first nappies. This future King of Kings was dressed as a humble newborn. His birthing room acknowledged His servanthood. A servant serves, but does not wear the top of the line jammies. We are God's servants, as well as His children, so I guess first on my to-do list, other than waking up each day, would be finding humble jobs I can do for the Kingdom.



Maybe writing Ransom Notes is part of that task, but hopefully I can search for additional 'servant' roles? Jesus washed the disciples feet shortly before His betrayal, even though Peter expressed concern. After finishing the cleansing of their feet, He reminded the disciples that they, too, should demonstrate their servanthood by caring for others, even perhaps washing of their feet. (John 13:1-17). Those disciples needed to get up, go out, and be humble workers.

Peter stumbled along the journey. Three times, later that same evening, he denied being a follower of Jesus. Peter, the bold one, stood by the fire warming his hands. Three times he denied being a follower of the Master, as the rooster announced morning was arriving. I wonder later, how many times Peter must have relived that evening, wondering why in the world he had been unwilling to admit being a member of Jesus' team?

As we prepare to moved forward this year, perhaps some of us may lie awake at night, reliving times during 2023, when we failed to speak up on behalf of the Lord, His church, or some loyal worker. Maybe we forgot to encourage a distraught helper in children's ministry or played a game of pickle ball, rather than assisting with a mission project. So, next step — identify your time(s) of weakness, pray for the Lord's forgiveness, grab your working shoes, and move boldly forward as an invigorated servant for the Master.

Two jobs I know, however, for which I will not volunteer — working in the nursery or replacing shingles on the church building roof. I will, however, try to push myself, with God's blessing, and stretch a bit. The time arrives in the life of every baby bird, when it must step out of the nest and try flying. Maybe momma bird has to give them a little shove with her wing, but staying in the nest is not an option. They would soon starve.

I'm still pondering and anticipating new adventures for Christian outreach and service for myself. Hopefully I'll see an open door of a person, job, or location needing a helping hand. Perhaps listening ears, or even an assistance with a messy or mundane task will knock on my heart's door. Second, I pray the Lord will cause a caring Christ follower to give me a shove, and that I will accept the challenge, adding the task to my to-do-list.

Won't You Join Me As An Active Servant in the Lord's 2024 Army?