

2013

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor... (2 Corinthians 8:9)

2013: YEAR OF THE STARS AND THE STRIPES

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THE GIFT OF GRACE

Christmas is often celebrated in the giving and receiving of gifts. It's a practice that goes back many generations. The Apostle Paul made the point, quoting the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

As sinners, we are indebted to God's sovereign grace and mercy. Jonah's exclamation was, "Salvation is of the LORD!" God is the giver!

This, of course, is supremely demonstrated in the work of Christ at Calvary. Christmas makes possible the work of Calvary. Calvary is defined by Christmas. Anselm's old question, "Cur Deus Homo—Why did God become Man?" is answered in the fact that the Redeemer had to be both fully God and fully man in order to make atonement for sin by living, dying and rising again.

The gift of the Son as Savior of the world is indescribably wonderful. Words cannot fully or even adequately express the superlative nature of this gift of grace. The Apostle Paul was utterly at a loss for words when he exclaimed, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

Giving and receiving are the two parts of the transaction of God's grace. God gives; sinners receive. For salvation to take place, there has to be a faith response. Faith—whose New Testament twin is repentance—gladly receives and rests upon the Person and Work of Jesus in His threefold offices of Prophet, Priest and King.

Are you in relationship with Him? Trust Him today, and trust Him always!



2013: THE BIG PICTURE

The year 2013 has raced past. Events and aspects that come to mind include:

- The nerve-wracking wait for green-card approval. It came eventually, and not without some concerns that approval might not be granted. We hoisted the Stars and Stripes in September!
- Visit of Granny Collins, Sue's mom, and attendant two-day trip to New York city (courtesy of US Airways who owed us complimentary tickets!)
- Enjoying a short break in the beautiful Smoky Mountains in Eastern Tennessee
- French missionary Jean-Claude Souillot and encouraging local churches to catch the vision for faithful biblical literature in French to Africa
- Sue's involvement as a room-mom at Bob Jones Elementary School where Matthew is a fifth-grade student
- Jim's five-day trip to the UK for discussions with superiors and attendance to routine matters there

About the pictures on this page:

Main: Airports—happy and sad all at once. Here we are in Charlotte, NC, on Granny's visit to the USA!

Top right: On learning of our Green Card application success, we had to celebrate with the Stars and Stripes!

Left top: In New York outside the Carnegie Hall. As the saying goes, "Like Mother, Like Daughter!"

Left middle: Jim and Grandma in Cornwall

Left bottom: Matthew's favorite car on stilts. Not everything is bigger in Texas—some things are unsurpassed in South Carolina!



SUE AND MATTHEW ADD THEIR THOUGHTS...

Matthew writes: I had a great time playing the piano at Hayward Mall recently. I go to a piano studio (you can see its emblem on the tee shirts in the picture on the left—it's called Piano Central Studios). Everyone from the studio played something in a group (all Christmas carols) Jingle Bells, Deck the Halls, Jolly old St Nicholas, etc. The one I played was "O Little Town of Bethlehem". There were lots of people watching us. I was a little nervous at first, but when I sat down at the piano, I sort of forgot that everyone was there and just played my part with my teacher and everyone else in the group.

Sue writes: This is the third year that we have lived in South Carolina and the southern way doesn't seem so different now. A few weeks ago, we celebrated Thanksgiving and I made a sweet potato casserole which is one of the traditional Thanksgiving dishes. Others include pumpkin pie, apple pie, and of course roast turkey with cranberry sauce. We have got used to the milder winters but still find the multitude of falling leaves a challenge in the autumn. It is great to watch Matthew growing up and forming friendships with children at school and at church. He very much enjoys school and I've been able to be involved in a number of activities at school this year, such as the end-of-year Christmas party. It was good to have my mum staying for a couple of weeks in September. It was nice to be able to show her around the Upstate of South Carolina and to take her to New York.



Pictures: Top cluster—The Titanic Adventure in Tennessee; Matthew seated outside International Bible Society in NY with Jeremiah Lanphier, a man captured whom God used in revival in the city; At the Bob Jones University lighting ceremony; Matthew climbing rockface in Central Park, New York; Holmes family at BJU lighting ceremony.

Middle cluster: Viola recital at Pinner Studios; Piano event in local shopping mall, playing "O Little Town of Bethlehem"; Celebrating 10th birthday with classmates at school—Pizza adds zest to this!

Right bottom: Tires and wheels...a picture taken in the parking lot

