CHURCH

Joy to the world, The Lord has come!

he author of this story is unknown and it has been told by many people throughout the years. The gentleman to whom I'm going to introduce was not a Scrooge, but a kind, generous man who loved his family and was upright in his dealings with other people. HOLLAND He could not understand how or why Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins. It did not make sense and he was too honest to

pretend otherwise. "I'm

truly sorry to distress

you," he told his wife,

you and the kids to

Eve." He went on to

"but I'm not going with

church this Christmas

say, he would feel like a

hypocrite and this year

he would much rather

stay home. He would

just wait up and read

until they returned. And so, he stayed behind as the family went to the candlelight

Shortly after the family drove away, snow began to fall. He went to the window and watched as the flurries became heavier. He then went

back to his chair in front of the fire to finish reading his newspaper. A short while later he heard a thud-

ding sound...then another, and then another. His first thought was that it sounded like someone throwing snowballs against his living room picture window. As he opened the front door to investigate, he found several birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter. did not realize the glass barrier was keeping

"Hmmm...so God sent His Son to rescue those who will trust Him." The man felt conviction within his soul and realized for the first time how the Son of God is the hope of eternal salvation.

them from entering the safety of his home. Well, he could not just let the poor creatures freeze, so he had an idea that the barn that housed his children's pony would provide a perfect place from the storm if he could only figure out how to lead them into it.

Throwing on his coat and rubber boots, he headed out into the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on the light, but the birds did not move. Figuring that food would entice them to come in, he hurried back to the house, grabbed some bread, and started making a trail of crumbs to the lighted stable. But to his dismay, the birds

paid no attention and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. Trying to catch them became comical as they were too fast and his attempt to herd them by waving his arms only made things worse as they scattered in every direction except where he wanted them to go. Suddenly, he realized they were simply overwhelmed with fear. "I must seem like a dangerous and terrifying giant he thought, if only I could think of a way to let them know they can trust me."

"If I could just convince them that I'm not going to hurt them and sincerely want to help them. But how? Whenever I move they go into a panic and seem to be confused and suspiciously determined to not let their guard down." Then it dawned on him, if only he could become a bird, he could mingle with them and speak their language. "Then hopefully they could come to know me and learn there is no need to fear. I could show them the way where they can be safe and content. Becoming one of them would allow me to demonstrate my compassion and then they could receive my grace." At that moment the church bells began to ring through the crisp stillness and as he stood there listening to the melody of "O come all ye faithful" he thought about how most people, (including himself) are generally afraid of God and have a difficult time with faith. "Hmmm...so God sent His Son to rescue those who will trust Him."

The man felt convic-

tion within his soul and realized for the first time how the Son of God is the hope of eternal salvation. Jesus had to somehow prove His love and dving on the cross became that way. After all these years he embraced God's love and why he needed a Savior. At that moment, he humbly fell to his knees in the snow and asked God to forgive and save him. "Christmas Day is the celebration of eternal salvation as the incarnation of Christ comes from the Latin version of John 1:14, which declares, "The Word (Christ) became flesh and made His dwelling among us." There is no greater gift than to know God's love!

Dr. Holland is a Christian author, outreach minister, and community chaplain. Check out his books and read more about the Christian life at billyhollandministries.com.

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