

The One Grace-Filled Gift You Can Give Yourself This Christmas

It's the first snowfall of the year tonight and as I look outside, it's a picture of perfection. All that white pure snow, blanketing the streets and lawns. Not a blemish in site. I could just hold my breath and watch in wonder.

If it stayed that way forever, it would make me happy.

The perfectly captured view from my window.

But I know it won't. Fresh fallen snow eventually turns a little brown, it gets rocks and sand mixed in and soon, it's a muddy mess all over the floors. You wonder what you ever loved about it in the first place. It wasn't what it seemed, and it's now all rather inconvenient.

And I think a little about life and how we wish it were perfect too. Like the picture outside my window. But it's not.

It's messy. The rocks and the sand, they're all there.

And this time of year, when so many are rejoicing and preparing—there are equal who are retreating and hurting.

And I think of those hearts in a muddy mess, even my own at times. In the middle of it all, the word that keeps coming back to me in this season, is an unusual one. It's not what I usually think about at Christmas, but I can't get it out of my thoughts. It's following me around, wherever I go.

Forgiveness.

I think about it so often, and then one day it came out another way in my mind: *For-gift-ness*.

It seems a little corny when I say it like that, and I never want to be corny, but I think of all the gifts of the season. And I think the giving and receiving of forgiveness is one that we forget about, but it's one that is attached to so much of our mud and mess.

Maybe we all need to give it.

In some way.

You know, and I know. We all know. Those pangs, the physical reaction that actually hurts when we are in our deep places and heart spaces when we cry out in the night. We long to be rid of it all, but it just seems so hard.

It's easier to hold on.

But grudges don't make good gifts.

Bitterness loves to dig deep.

Maybe it's time to give ourselves a gift. To let go of the wrongs against us. The things we hold that bring us pain.

Even if we're never been asked, granted or considered. Even if we are in the wrong; even if we are not.

That's why forgiveness is a gift. You give it without expecting anything in return.

Sorry may never come and explanations never be uttered, but the releasing that washes over when you let go is the greatest gift you can give yourself.

Forgiveness brings freedom. Which also was the ultimate purpose of the gift of the first Christmas.

So this Christmas, forgive yourself of the things you hold onto that are hard to let go. Forgive those who have hurt you, even if they never ask or admit their wrongs. Seek forgiveness if you need to make things right.

Given, received and offered. Life's never going to be perfect; there's always going to be mess. But look for the moment of freshly fallen snow.

Let forgiveness cover you like a blanket. Let it rest on your life.

A gift to yourself this season. {eo}

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