

## A Christmas carol for the holiday race

Dan Nelson - pastor

Calvary Chapel of the Ojai Valley

T'was the week before Christmas and all over the place, people were scurrying along through the rat race. They rushed; they hurried, and tried to do it all, as they pushed through the traffic to get to the mall.

It's already dark, there's no place to park, and someone pulls in front of you to grab the last stall. Santa is there, sitting in his chair, and the line of kids goes all the way to the wall.

With Starbucks in hand, your favorite brand, you embark on your shopping with a skip and a smile. But after waiting an hour, your sweet turns to sour, when you notice your line is more than a mile.

Dad had appointments and people to meet, conflicts to resolve and others to greet. Year-end reviews, building budgets to plan a time to touch bases with each woman and man.

He put some lights on the house but then had to run it looks like this year it might never get done. But at least there's some twinklers, snowmen, and deer and the neighbors will know that we still live here.

Mom baked cookies and all sorts of treats, cleaned up the house, washed the clothes and the sheets, she got things all ready for the holiday guest. Her list was too long for a moment of rest.

There were parties to go to and gifts to mail a newspaper coupon to get for a one-day sale. Quickly balance the checkbook and review the account, Frown and lament the disappointing amount.

They head over to Wal-Mart even though it's a zoo, to try to save a dollar on the toys that are new. They found a gift that they liked at the sporting goods store but they know if they buy there, it will cost more.

The kids practice their songs and lines for their show, they ask to go to the house of every friend that they know Gymnastics, tennis and all-star soccer too, Homemade crafts and glitter and non-toxic glue.

The church needs some help to turn on the heat so people won't freeze from their head to their feet. Decorations and costumes, sound systems and chairs People to usher, read scripture, lead prayers.

The list never ends, there is so much to do you ate a holiday meal but was too busy to chew, then you scramble and sprint to the next thing another gathering of people, another gift to bring.

You rush and you rush until you finally crash, there is just enough energy to take out the trash. You stumble back into the house and flop on the couch it's time to sing Christmas carols but you feel like a grouch.

There's a fire log burning and presents under the tree, Dad and Mom try to unwind as they sip their hot tea. He slowly opens a card and quietly reads of family and friends with much greater needs.

He opens his Bible and gathers the family around, as he finds his way to the verses where the story is found. Then, once again; as they started to hear God's Spirit filled their home with true "Christ"-mas cheer.

Good News, Jesus Christ is born, Glad Tidings to everyone, Peace on earth, the Savior's birth, incarnate, God's own Son Good will toward men, the price for sin, the door, the truth, the way Wise men still seek, strength for the weak, abundant life today!

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*Merry Christmas*

Dan Nelson is a frequent contributor to the Ojai Valley News and currently serves the Ojai Valley Ministerial Association and community as editor of the Religion Column. Permission is freely granted to reprint the article in its entirety. Dan Nelson is pastor of Calvary Chapel Christian Church of the Ojai Valley.



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**Sunday Worship:**

**9:00 & 10:30am**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View

**Mid-Week Study:**

**7:00pm Thursday**  
Calvary Chapel Ojai Valley  
195 Mahoney Ave., Oak View