

From Warrior to Worshipper A Christmas Truce

The setting was the Western Front in 1914, near the beginning of World War I. A newspaper reported this miracle: German troops bunkered down on one side and British soldiers on the other. Fierce enemies were just 75 yards apart in the midst of a fierce battle. The newspaper said, "Along a 300-mile front were men who had been seeking to kill each other in an unstoppable cascade of troop mobilization, angry diplomacy, cross-border skirmishes and mass invasions. Soldiers and politicians had gone into conflict believing the fighting would be over by Christmas, but Christmas was now here. Soldiers found themselves stalemated in cold, muddy trenches instead of church sanctuaries."



But then, miraculously, the fighting paused for a few days. In an amazing display of reverence soldiers on the German side began to sing Christmas carols, loud enough to be heard by the British. It was Christmas Eve. Soon the English joined so that the carols were sung in unison. The soldiers came together for

worship in a "no-man's land" between the two sides. Who knows why the soldiers had the confidence to come together, fearing they were being tricked. God was obviously in control. They drank together and even played a good natured soccer match that was documented by letters home from soldiers on both sides. Christmas is a time of giving, as the wise men did at the manger, thousands of years before. The soldiers exchanged gifts, trading food, cigars and personal supplies. A London Times story (dated December 31, 1914) described the battlefield pause in this way: "Many of our chaps walked out and met the Germans between the lines ... I went over in the afternoon and was photographed in a group of English. " It was an amazing display of humanity among different cultures. An officer described the opposing German officers this way: "The Germans opposite were awfully decent fellows – Saxons, intelligent, respectable looking men. I had quite a decent talk with three or four and have two names and addresses in my notebook." The Christmas Truce of 1914 was an unofficial ceasefire among 100,000 soldiers.

Christmas had transformed warriors to worshippers. God does wonders if we let Him.

The Christmas truce lasted until December 26 or later along the battle front. But then, human nature took over again. Worried commanders moved to end the era of good feeling. Troops that had shared the Christmas spirit with their German counterparts were removed from the front line and replaced with soldiers who hadn't been involved in the cease-fire. The replacement front line was back in the warrior mode.

Looking back on the events of December 1914, isn't it fantastic to think that Jesus Christ had transformed lives, even if just temporarily, in the midst of global conflict. What conflicts are you facing that need a truce in the Spirit of God's gift to us – the birth of His Son? What needs a truce in your life so that you can fully celebrate how Jesus would transform the world?

Set aside your worries and conflicts this Christmas. Call a truce to the hostilities that divide you from others. Have the confidence to ignore your different perspectives and show genuine compassion for others who are different than you. If you can do this, just maybe you can realize the difference Jesus has made on your life. Forgive others who think differently and forgive those who oppose you. And then, move on, free of hostilities. Your conflicts are smaller than a global war. Don't let anyone push you back into a state of separation. It is OK to agree to disagree and still appreciate the worth of all of God's people. The world returned to a state of war, but we don't have to. Let Jesus transform you from a Warrior to a Worshipper.

The Bible Says: *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:32). There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28).*

Prayer: Dear Lord. We may differ in our goals and objectives, but we are one in the faith. We pray that we can let go of hostilities, worries and conflicts and focus on the good in other people and genuinely worship you as the Prince of Peace. Amen.