

Hey mom....I love you!

We were walking through Costco the other day, Jessica and I and 3 of our kiddos, Lillian (8), Charlotte (7), and Jackson (4). Lillian and Charlotte are following closely behind Jessica who is a good 50 feet in front of me and Jackson. I am strategically steering the shopping cart through the crowd and Jackson is mandatorily confined to the shopping cart, because he's a 4-year-old boy and giving him free rein in Costco isn't worth the stress. Out of nowhere Jackson shouts very loudly "Hey mom!" Now Jessica is a good distance away from us and shouting at her from that far away isn't the best, so I begin to say to Jackson, "Hey buddy, you can't just shout at mom. She's busy shopping and you need to wait until we get closer to her to talk to her," But before I can get the words out, Jackson finishes his sentence with his loud shouting voice "...I love you!"

Instead of finishing my sentence of correction towards him, my heart was melted because of the sweetness of this little boy's heart and the exuberance of which he had to declare this poignant truth to his momma. I've learned to really enjoy these moments as a dad...enjoy the blessing of a loud kid who is full of love. I don't think this spontaneous declaration of his love for momma was because we had just bought a bag of peppermint bark and told him that he could have one when we get home. And I don't think it was because we told him he could have whatever food sample he wanted as we walked the aisles of Costco. No, I'm pretty sure it was just a truth that he knew deep down in his heart and he couldn't help but express it in that moment. He expressed it the best way a 4-year-old boy does...shouting it as loud as he could in the freezer section of Costco.

Later in the day I was reflecting on the joy of the Christmas season, which is by far my favorite time of year. I thought about how the coming of Jesus the Messiah as a baby boy, born in a manger, is the fullness of my Heavenly Father's heart shouting as loud as he can to me... "Hey Karl, I love you!"

I love you so much that I am willing to set my glory aside. I love you so much that I am willing to humiliate myself and take on flesh. I love you so much that I will live this life in human form for the sole purpose of dying a brutal death so that I can bear the wrath of God for your sins. I love you so much that I will endure the cross for the joy of being reconciled with you. I love you so much that I will do all of this for you even though you will be hostile towards me. Hey Karl, I love you!

This Christmas season, may our hearts and minds be reminded of the pursuing, steadfast, and eternal love of God that was manifest in a manger over 2000 years ago. The incarnation of Jesus is God shouting as loud as He can "Hey (insert your name), I love you!" God's love has come! Let us celebrate, let us rest and soak it in, and let us respond in worshipful wonder and awe. God really loves us!

Luke 2:10-14

"Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."