

There's a movie on every Christmas that I simply cannot watch without crying. It is usually shown several times each year, so I get plenty of opportunities. The movie stars Jimmy Stewart and is entitled *It's a Wonderful Life*. In this movie the principal character, George Bailey, gets into financial trouble with his savings and loan business. Totally discouraged, he realizes that he is worth more dead than alive because of the value of his insurance policy. Through the artifice of a guardian angel he is given a chance to see what life would be like if he had never been born. He was allowed to see the degradation and corruption which enveloped his home town because he was not there to promote Good and help other people with their lives. George meets those who do not know him, and it shocks him. But he is more shocked by the sight of his old friends who are now homeless, or destitute, or in trouble with the law. This forces George to realize that his life of helping others was worth all the trouble.

We can think in a similar way about what life would be like if God had not established his presence or if Jesus Christ had not lived here on earth. Think of the degradation and corruption of the world if there were no one to stop or even slow down evil. What a terrible place it would be to live! This is what hell will be like: the total absence of the Goodness of God. I thank God that He cared enough to interact in this world and throw us a lifeline.

What we are doing when we meet around the communion table is essentially what the townspeople did to George at the end of the movie, when they all came to his aid. They remembered that he had saved their lives and their jobs, and they paid him their gratitude. This is the point in the movie where I always cry. But much more important than the story in the movie is the nature of our communion with Christ. He saved us in a spiritual way by giving his life and his blood so that we might live forever with him. We should show our gratitude by worshipping him and loving him with every fiber of our being.

David Elrod saw the same message in the classic Dicken's novel *A Christmas Carol*. The Ghost of Christmas Future showed Scrooge that his whole life of hoarding money was meaningless in the eyes of his acquaintances. His life was nothing in their eyes, and there was no regret in their hearts when he died. What a miserable way to live! David also makes the point that if Satan had never existed on earth what a wonderful place it would be! There would be no need for locks or weapons of any kind. There would be no pain or tears. This would be heaven on earth. And this is the way it will be in heaven. There will be only Goodness, with no trace of Satan and Evil. There it will truly be a Wonderful Life. We surely don't want to miss it!