

## **From trash to treasure**

c. michelle bryant

Decorating the Christmas tree is always a joyous occasion and one typically shared with relatives. Perhaps the family's favorite Christmas music is playing in the background or maybe there is some hot chocolate or munchies nearby or other special customs that go along with your holiday tree trimming traditions. Whatever the tree-decorating event holds it generally serves as the beginning of the making of holiday memories for that specific year.

The other day I offered to help my aunt and uncle decorate their tree. It is a massive tree and generally takes days, sometimes weeks to get it all set up as my aunt has a bad shoulder and my uncle has emphysema. My aunt, like me is very sentimental and has ornaments from every trip and cruise she's ever been on, that every child or grand child has ever made, some that although through the years now are broken were my great grand mothers, as well as ones she just liked and couldn't pass up buying. She has over 35 years of accumulated ornaments in boxes that filled both sofas in her living room. When I walked in I realized it was no wonder it took them weeks to decorate their tree.

Among her many ornaments all of which had a story to be told, we came across a particularly special green and gold glass cross ornament that was broken on the top corner. Now mind you we had already placed many of my great-grand mothers broken ornaments on the tree that she just couldn't bear to part with so what was so special about this one?

"Let me tell you the story about this one," she said. "I was in the store and I walked by the counter and there it was just lying in the trash. It looked perfectly good to me. So I BOLDLY you know me..." she laughed. "walked behind the counter and got it out of the trash and asked the clerk 'What's wrong with this? Why are you throwing it away?' and she said 'It's broken.'" Now my aunt grabs my arm and says, "Look, right here. Do you see that tiny little flaw, that little crack right there in the upper corner? That's why they were going to throw it away. And look, when you put it on the tree you can't even see that. And it was a ten dollar ornament several years ago."

The cross was placed on the tree among the lights with the other ornaments and it simply glistened. That is what got me to thinking the entire trip home about this message. We are ALL broken and cracked somewhere. May it be in our hearts, our minds, our walks with the Lord, even our daily lives. But despite that flaw we do not deserve to be cast away, thrown out, forgotten by society, religious groups, friends, co-workers, family members, anyone. We should remember- we are all flawed somewhere.

Given the right circumstances, the proper situation, and the correct surroundings we all can sparkle. Everyone deserves a chance to get out of the trash in his or her lives and shine. I encourage you, especially this Christmas season to find someone who feels broken, cracked, flawed, to hang them on your tree of encouragement and love and watch them sparkle and shine. The glow will brighten your world as well.

*~ c. michelle bryant is a freelance writer and the author of the devotional book God, are You listening?*