

Su Ling's Christmas

In faraway China, a long time ago, a little girl in a bundle of rags was carried into an orphanage kept by some Christian missionaries and Chinese people. Soft brown eyes peered out from the rags as the missionary stroked the matted hair of a four-year-old Chinese girl.

"What is your name?" asked the kindly lady as she took the little girl in her arms. "Su Ling," replied a scared little voice. But before long Su Ling wasn't afraid any more. Under the care of the people who kept the home for orphans, she soon became a rosy, well-fed little girl.

And Su Ling loved to hear the people at the mission home talk about God and the Lord Jesus Christ. They told about a place called Heaven, where God lives. And she learned that He wanted to have people come to live with Him in His beautiful home forever and ever. It was so wonderful for Su Ling to hear that God loves everybody. When she learned that the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only Son, had died for her sins, she believed in Him and received Him as her own Savior.

That was only a few months after she came to the home for orphans, and from that time on she had the sweetest face of any of the girls there. The teachers and the children said, "Su Ling has the Jesus shine on her face."

For three happy years, Su Ling lived in the orphanage. For three Christmases people in China and from over the sea had given her many things a little girl likes.

Now it was the fourth Christmas and Su Ling was eight years old. Miss Soong, one of the Chinese teachers, had said that Christmas was a time for giving gifts because God had given His best gift, His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Savior. At Christmas, she said we especially remember the day the Lord Jesus was born on the earth.

Su Ling had a big idea. This year she would rather give gifts than receive them. How wonderful it would be to give a gift to every boy and girl in the orphanage, and to Old Chang, the gatekeeper, and even to every teacher and all the other workers there! Imagine a little orphan girl, with no way to earn money, getting an idea like that!

One day a guest in the orphanage told her how to get the presents. Su Ling listened to every word as he told her how, in answer to prayer, money had been given to him for his trip. He had lost his suitcase and trunks, but God had seen to it that he got everything he needed, and even some extra things. He said, "If you have taken the Lord Jesus as your Savior, God is your Father. Just ask Him for anything you want, believing he can give it, and He will."

One day as Su Ling worked together with the teacher, she said, "God can do anything, can't He, Miss Soong?" "Indeed He can," replied Miss Soong, and she sounded as if she were very sure of it.

"Could He do something for a little girl like me, if I wasn't selfish and only wanted something for other people?" "I'm sure He could," said Miss Soong. "I've asked Him for some presents," said Su Ling. "That's nice," said Miss Soong. But she seemed to be thinking more about her work than about what Su Ling was saying.

"I've asked Him for two hundred eighty-eight presents," beamed Su Ling. "What?" Miss Soong cried and almost dropped the shirt she was mending. "Two hundred eighty-eight presents! What would you do with so many? That's rather selfish, isn't it?"

"Oh, but they're not for me. You see, the first Christmas I was here I got all the rice I wanted, and some sweets, and a rag doll. Last Christmas I got a new dress, some candy, and a nice book. I don't want to be getting and getting and never giving. The visiting man got lots of things just by asking God, so I decided that this Christmas I'm going to ask God to give me two hundred eighty-eight presents for all the children in the orphanage, for the teachers, and for Old Chang, the gatekeeper."

“Oh, Su Ling, that’s asking God for a lot,” exclaimed Miss Soong. “But God can do it, can’t He?” insisted Su Ling. “Yes, but – but –” Miss Soong didn’t know what to say.

The missionaries prayed much about Su Ling. Their faith grew weaker as Christmas drew near, but not Su Ling’s faith. The closer Christmas came, the more certain she was that God was going to answer her prayer. What were two hundred eighty-eight presents to One who owned billions and billions of stars, the moon, and the mountains? Su Ling sang and laughed and was happy as could be. Wouldn’t the children be surprised?

Christmas came nearer and nearer, and the children were almost bursting with excitement. But the missionaries were sad because they had not been able to figure out a way to help God answer Su Ling’s prayer. They were afraid she was going to be very sad on Christmas Day.

The last boat had come in with some boxes for Su Ling. The Grace and Truth Class of a church in America had promised to send her a doll. “It must be a beautiful doll,” said Miss Frazier, one of the other ladies who helped at the orphanage. “The girls in that class send such lovely things. But I’m afraid a doll won’t give Su Ling much pleasure when she’s expecting two hundred eighty-eight gifts.”

The big day finally arrived. First, they had a lovely program. At the close, one of the teachers explained the real meaning of Christmas. Su Ling listened carefully. Even though she had heard the story often, she loved to hear how the Lord Jesus had left Heaven to come to earth as a baby so He could die for her sins and those of everybody in the whole world.

She especially liked to hear the story read from the Bible. It was exciting to know that the angel had told Mary, and later her husband Joseph, about the Baby before He was born. He even told them what His name should be.

Then came the time for giving the gifts. One by one Miss Frazier handed each child a present and Miss Soong gave each a piece of candy. Dark eyes sparkled and white teeth flashed big smiles. There were tears in Miss Frazier’s eyes as she handed Su Ling her package.

“Here’s a pretty doll for you, Su Ling, from the Grace and Truth Class.” Su Ling thanked her and glanced trustingly at the few packages still under the tree. Then she opened her gift and looked inside.

“Oh, how pretty,” she thought. Bowing her head, she prayed, “Dear Father, I thank You. I didn’t know what to ask You for that the children and the big people would all like, but You know just what to send. Thank You, Father, Amen.”

Su Ling left her chair quietly and went to Miss Frazier, “May I give out my gifts now?” she asked. “Your gifts? What do you mean, Su Ling? Wasn’t there a doll in the box I gave you?”

“No, Miss Frazier, I don’t need a doll! I have one. But look at these pretty combs. I’m sure there are enough for everyone in the orphanage.” Miss Frazier looked through her tears and saw combs of all colors: red, yellow, green, blue and pink.

Su Ling started at the front row and handed everyone in the room a comb. How thrilled they were! When Old Chang got his, he combed his hair right there with some extra motions that made all the children laugh. It was truly Su Ling’s happiest Christmas.

All during the next year whenever their rice was almost gone and one might have become discouraged, someone would say, “Remember the combs.” That would cheer everyone, because God, who listened to Su Ling’s request, could in answer to their prayers, send rice for the children.

It wasn’t until the next year that Miss Frazier learned what had happened. The Grace and Truth Class had packed boxes to be sent to two different cities in China – one box had a doll and the other the combs. Someone had made a mistake when they put the labels on the packages. But God made no mistake. He had answered Su Ling’s prayer.