the GIVER: *a LOVE story Let Every HEART Prepare HIM Room*

John 3:16a "For here is the way God loved the world—He gave His only, unique Son as a *gift.* (TPT)

I wanna finish this year where I started. On my knees. That's where I began, pondering a word that just kept coming to me. When finally I determined it was to be *'my word'* for the year, I let it steep. That must be its purpose—I told myself—since everywhere I turned this time last year, something about it was splashed, appearing, grounded, rooted, dawning. I think I finally—after twelve fleeting months are headed out the year's closing door—I think I finally get it!

In quiet and peaceful moments, I mumble strains of Christmas hymns beneath my breath. I am surrounded by tiny twinkle lights that ricochet from strands of tinsel. Intense emotions of humility and awe buoy the lackluster ebb and flow of shame and wonder at His incomprehensible Grace. Before I know it or understand it, I find myself flat on my face before the tiny manger that is supposed to depict where my Savior stretched on skin and was laid when He came to earth to 'get' me. All around, amidst the glisten of lights, throbs the realization what He did for me; that I was chosen to be a part of His story, His family, the reason He was born to die. Over and over, my soul repeats, 'Let every heart prepare Him room.' And I finally get it.

Decorate. That is 'my word' for this year almost past. And I look inside at my soul and I know instantly that's what the Lord wanted from me most. He wanted me to give my utmost attention in 2024 to making sure my interior was prepared for Him. That in all things, I was getting ready for Him, making arrangements for His entrance in big and small ways in my life this year, fashioning a temple where once a stable stood, creating in me a clean heart, designing a welcoming space in my soul for His presence.

I peek through the glimmering lights that soon will be taken down and packed up for another year, and I know this time, it will be different. As the decorations for this holy season are put away, there will remain an internal and eternal decor, one where joy and hope and peace dangle liberally from a heart of gratitude. I am utterly stunned by the recognition He has been whispering all along, that His love never stops loving (1 Cor. 13:8) and His grace never stops giving. His love remains when the season ends and the party is over and the people leave and the chaos clashes with the sound of silence, His love remains. Always. After all, He is the Gift the Father gave because of His great love for you and for me. ***MERRY CHRISTMAS***✨