



Times Remembered

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Valentine's Day started from an ancient Roman festival celebrating spring and fertility. That's where we got the romance part, along with Cupid, the pink-cheeked, arrow-toting Roman god of love. The early church removed the heathen aspects by turning the pagan holiday into a feast day honoring St. Valentine.

No matter the origins, what could be more welcome in bleak midwinter than roses, glittery cards, or chocolate?

In elementary school I enjoyed decorating a beautiful valentine's box for myself or working on one big box for everyone's valentines. I watched as all the kids put their valentines in the big box on the teacher's desk and anticipated how many cards I'd receive.

The great classics, like "Honey, Be my Valentine," or "2 Good to be Forgotten," were popular. My taste was more toward the comical ones than romantic ones. My friends and I liked the

Valentine's Day

heart-shaped candy with love messages on them too.

We had about 28-30 students in our class and I usually received 20 or 25 cards. After valentines mail came the refreshments. We had Kool-Aid and cupcakes furnished by the room mothers. We had the rest of the afternoon to socialize and eat candy and cupcakes.

Nowadays, I make valentines goodies at home such as:

No-Bake

Cherry Darlings

1 cup finely crushed vanilla wafers

½ cup confectioner's sugar plus additional for rolling

½ cup walnuts finely chopped (optional)

1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder plus additional for rolling

¼ cup dried cherries finely chopped

1 tablespoon light corn syrup

Mix together crushed wafers, ½ cup confectioner's sugar, walnut and 1 tablespoon cocoa. Stir in cherries and corn syrup, if too dry add a few drops of water.

Roll into ¾-inch balls. Roll half the balls in cocoa and the other half in confectioner's sugar. Allow flavors to blend in a tightly covered container for several hours before serving.

Here are some easy treats for the love in your life!

Chocolate-Dipped Valentines

2 ½ cups flour
½ cup sugar for addi-

tional for dipping
1 cup (2 sticks) cold butter, cut in chunks
1 egg
½ cup dried cherries finely chopped
½ teaspoon almond extract
Red food coloring (optional)

1 1/3 cups milk chocolate chips

Red and pink sprinkles

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Combine flour and ½ cup sugar. Using a pastry blender to cut in butter until mixture resembles fine crumbs. Add egg and mix until smooth. Stir in cherries and almond extract. For pink dough add a few drops of red food coloring. Knead dough until it forms a smooth ball.

Shape dough into ¾ inch balls and place 2 inches apart on an ungreased cookie sheet. Flatten balls into 1 ½ rounds.

Bake 10-12 minutes and cool for 1 minute before transferring to wire rack

Place chocolate chips in a 2-cup glass measure cup and microwave on high 40-60 seconds, stirring every 20 seconds. When melted, dip half of each cookie into chocolate. Place on paper-lined baking sheet. Sprinkle immediately with sprinkles.

**CHOCOLATE AND CHERRIES GO TOGETHER LIKE LOVE AND MARRIAGE!!
HAPPY VALENTINES DAY!!**

Say you can't dance? Try whacking your thumb with a hammer



America's Heartland
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I heard a story not long ago about an entertainer who canceled at the last minute his appearance at a women's auxiliary meeting. The president of the auxiliary was frantic, wondering how she would find a replacement on such short notice. About that time she glanced out the window and saw a man whirl across a nearby construction site doing a series of double flips and one-handed cartwheels before disappearing into some bushes.

She rushed outside and found the man's foreman. "That was absolutely incredible," she said. "Do you think that fellow would be willing to do that again at our women's meeting? I'll pay him \$100."

"Hey, Bubba," the foreman shouted. "This woman says she'll give you \$100 if you'll smash your thumb with a hammer again."

I expect it didn't take Bubba long to turn down that job offer. We're not eager to repeat some things, like hitting our thumbs with a hammer. Proverbs 22:3 tells us a

prudent man keeps an eye out for bad things that can happen and is careful to avoid them.

We certainly do all in our power to avoid pain and suffering. But, you know, Jesus did not. He gladly accepted the pain and suffering that came with being crucified. I was reminded of that on a recent tour of the Holy Land. While there, I visited the Garden of Gethsemane where Jesus spent time praying before He was arrested by an angry mob.

From Gethsemane, Jesus could watch those angry people walk down the hill from Jerusalem, cross the valley and make their way up to where He waited. It's a relatively short walk. Jesus didn't run away. He didn't hide. He allowed them to take him into custody. He willingly endured the suffering and the shame of the Cross because that was His mission.

I hear from people all the time who say going to the Holy Land and walking where Jesus walked has been one of the greatest blessings of their lives. They say it has given them insights into the Bible that they couldn't get from reading books or watching documentaries.

I agree. Looking upon those same mountains that Jesus saw during his earthly ministry is awe-inspiring. So is gazing across the Sea of Galilee, walking the streets of Jerusalem, visiting Golgotha where Jesus was crucified, or stepping into that empty tomb, tears pooling in your eyes as

you contemplate afresh and anew that He's not there, that He arose.

You never read the Bible the same way after visiting the Holy Land. You have geographical and cultural perspectives that you didn't have before. The Bible comes to life like never before. But more than that, visiting the Holy Land is a deeply moving spiritual experience for everyone who goes.

I've heard from several people who say they'd like to make the trip. Drop me a note or call me if you're interested. I know it would be special if we could all go Land together, and I'd be glad to make the arrangements if enough folks are interested.

Brother Maze Jackson, a Baptist evangelist from yesteryear, was the one who really got me interested in going. He told about putting stones into his pockets from that storied place where David defeated Goliath. He told about the incredible view from Mount Carmel where Elijah took down 450 prophets of Baal. He told of the victory he felt standing inside that empty tomb, knowing Jesus left that place on resurrection Sunday. And he told of the tears of gratitude that welled up in his eyes as he walked up Mount Calvary.

Tears aren't uncommon for visitors to the Holy Land, but not the kind of tears that come from whacking your thumb with a hammer. These are those sweet tears that come from knowing you're standing on the same ground where Jesus once stood.

Did you know?

Space heaters are responsible for 43 percent of home heating fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association.



- * Place your space heater on a level, non-flammable surface
- * Make sure your space heater has an auto shutoff function
- * Never pair your space heater with an extension cord
- * Never leave a space heater unattended when in use
- * Keep space heaters at least 3 ft. from all flammable items

A 1,500-watt space heater operating 12-hours a day will add about \$67 to your monthly bill

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