

Austen's Food Court Finding

by Lynette Ecord

Austen was excited! He was one of just a few of the students in his school choir who had been chosen to go and visit and sing for another school. After they sang the teacher and other adults were taking them to the mall where they could buy lunch at the food court, play some arcade games if they wanted to, and do some shopping. Austen had been saving money from doing chores for his parents and grandparents and had already decided what he wanted to buy.

All the kids had a great time singing for the younger kids and wishing them a Merry Christmas! Then it was time to load up on the bus and head to the mall. First stop was the food court. Oh, there were so many choices! Mexican, Italian, Corn Dogs and Cheese Dogs on a stick, Chinese food, just about anything you can imagine! And of course, there were plenty of desserts there too. Austen's stomach growled in anticipation as he tried to decide what he was going to eat. And then, of course, he could finally get those two items he'd been saving up his money for. His mom had given him money to buy his lunch, so all his money could be used for what he wanted – and maybe there'd be a little left over to play some games when he was finished shopping.

But then he noticed something. There were a couple of his classmates who were sitting at the tables, with no food, and not looking around to see what they might buy for their lunch. In fact, they looked rather sad. Austen walked over to them and asked them if they weren't going to eat. It turns out that neither of them had any money for lunch. How sad is that? Imagine sitting in the middle of almost every kind of food you could imagine, watching your classmates and everyone else enjoying some delicious food while you sat there hungry. What do you think Austen did?

Several years ago, Austen had noticed the homeless people who lived under the bridges in the city near his home. And ever since then Austen had prayed every night for Jesus to help those people get good jobs and homes, and to get to know Jesus. So, when Austen realized that his school friends' parents hadn't had enough money to give them to buy food for lunch, he immediately decided that he was going to buy them lunch. His Mom had given him a little more than he needed for his own lunch, but not very much, so he had to use some of the money that he had been saving to buy some special things so that his friends could enjoy the special lunch too. He thought, "Well, I'll just get one of the things I was wanting to buy and when I've saved up some more money, I'll buy the other thing I wanted." So, after they ate, Austen went to do his shopping, and guess what? One of the things he wanted he got a \$5 discount on and he had just enough to buy both things he had wanted! Is God wonderful?

It makes God happy when we choose to care more about what other people need, than about what we want. In the Bible book of Matthew, chapter 25 it tells us that when Jesus comes back to take us all to heaven He will say to his children "I was hungry, and you gave me food. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was alone and away from home, and you invited me into your house. I was without clothes, and you gave me something to wear. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me." And then He will say "I tell you the truth. Anything you did for any of my people here, you also did for me." I want to hear Jesus say that to me, don't you?