

# Christmas Day

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[ 0 : 00 ] So turn with me if you go to Luke chapter 2. I will speak to you from verse 10 to 11.

! And yet my brother came to receiving faith in Christ on that day.

I remember my father saying it was like a plane circling the airport that he never thought was going to land. I hope we won't learn that this morning. This is, isn't it, likely to be the most unique Christmas of our lives, the strangest Christmas of our lives.

And for many of you, maybe particularly at home, it feels like Christmas has been cancelled this year. Gone are the family gatherings. Gone is the big meal around the table.

For many, this Christmas, the lingering memory is of being alone and of being isolated. Stuck in our quiet homes with none of the big family laughter and children's squeals and joy that we all long for.

[ 1 : 22 ] It will be for many in our community today a silent Christmas, a lonely Christmas, coming quietly and humbly to a world that is shrouded in darkness.

But despite how you may feel this morning, Christmas is not cancelled, it's just been cleared. This year we are reminded starkly, aren't we, that Christmas is not about big family gatherings or presents or parties.

Or parties. Or parties. At Christmas is about the revelation that in the midst of darkness and in the midst of sorrow, in the midst of oppression and great fear, into the middle of all that mess that is life on earth, God has come to be with us.

God so loves this world that he's committed to us, to be with us, to enter into our darkness, to come and live in the desert, and to make a way so that we could live with him forever.

And so wherever you are right now, and whatever emotions you're feeling, today is the day that we remember that God has come to be with us.

[ 2 : 35 ] To be with you. That God left heaven to come to our earth, to shine into the darkness, to breathe life into our illness.

To bring blessing and fullness into our emptiness and our pain. And the way that God comes is not with trumpet, not with fanfare, it's not with crowds, it's not with candlelit carol services in beautiful buildings.

But instead, God comes, as noticed and as known, born into a barn. In absolute austerity and embarrassing humility.

God Almighty comes to us as an infant, a baby born to an unmarried teenage girl who's far from home. And God came into the darkness of life on earth, and he embraced all its messiness and brokenness and smallness.

And so Christmas is a great paradox, isn't it? That the Lord Almighty, the great creator of heaven and earth, became so incredibly small for us.

[ 3 : 43 ] Coming to earth, not in some fantastic, supernatural form, but as a totally unremarkable, vulnerable peasant child.

God came to save the world as a baby in backwater Beth's head. And paradoxically, for us, all the clutter of Christmas has been swept away this year. All the restrictions and all the cancellations actually provide you and I with an opportunity today.

A gift uniquely this year in that you have the space and the stillness to draw near to the manger. To gaze upon the Christ child.

To contemplate what it means that God is with us in this baby. And so, this morning, we draw ever so close to the very centre of the Christian message. The very heart of the Christian faith.

And it's announced to us in the words of an angel. Who announces the birth of Jesus to the least likely of people. A group of social outcasts. Socially distant shepherds.

[ 4 : 52 ] And the Christmas message we find, first and foremost, is for the lonely. And it's for the lot. And it's for the outcasts. And the message delivered by the angels from the mouth of God is this.

Can you see it in chapter 2 verse 10? It is, do not be afraid. It is, do not be afraid. That is the most common command in all of the world.

Do not be afraid. So the angel comes to Zechariah, John the Baptist's father. And an angel says to him, do not be afraid.

And an angel appears. The archangel Gabriel appears to Mary. And what's the angel's message to Mary is, do not be afraid.

And the angel also appears to Joseph. And the angel's message to Joseph is, do not be afraid. And if ever there was a Christmas that we needed to hear that, it's this Christmas.

[ 5 : 52 ] We live in a country, don't we, that is trapped by fear. Trapped by fear. And so this Christmas, this is God's message.

Do not be afraid. No matter how bad it looks. No matter how deep your darkness. No matter how lonely you feel or hopeless it seems. Do not be afraid. No matter your anxiety.

No matter your depression. No matter your problems. No matter your mess. Do not be afraid. That is what God wants you to hear this morning. And so do not be afraid of your future.

And do not be afraid of your present. And do not be afraid of your past. Do not be afraid. The shepherds were afraid. They were freaking out, weren't they?

The SV is so polite, isn't it? Look at the end of verse 9. It's so polite. The shepherds, they were filled with great fear.

[ 6 : 55 ] I can imagine that you can think of far more colourful language to describe our own feeling. More accurately. An angel from heaven delivers God's words to them personally.

And on seeing God's messenger and the glory of the Lord filling the night sky with light. The first reaction was not joy or peace. But fear.

Crippling fear. All consuming fear. And many of us are afraid of the idea of facing God somehow. And we're afraid because we're frail.

And we know we have failed. We know that there are things that we should have done that we've not done. There's things that we should not have done that we have done. And all of us know in our heart of hearts there is no health industry.

And when we stand in the light of God's glory, where all our darkness and all our rebellion is exposed before it, we're doomed.

[ 7 : 52 ] Because all of us know deep down that we cannot stand before our holy, almighty God. Do you know it? And expect to survive as judgment.

Because we're not holy, are we? And I'm not holy, and you are. And there's a dirt to us that we can't wash off. And we're covered in sin. We're lost and we're alone. And we don't want the light.

Because we're quite happy living in the darkness. We're afraid of God. Afraid of his holiness and his justice. And so if you are afraid of God and afraid of facing him.

Afraid that if he really exists this morning, you are in deep trouble. The message of Christmas is this. See the baby. Do not be afraid. Why?

Chapter 2 verse 10. Fear not. For behold, stop what you are doing and look. Because I bring you good news of great joy that will be fraught in love.

[ 8 : 54 ] Don't be afraid. Don't be in terror of God this morning. And afraid of life because Christmas is about good news. To kind of the picture of the God, he seems to say in every sermon that the gospel is good news, not good advice.

And Christmas is news. It's news about an event that has actually happened. It's about history. It's about an event that is good. So don't be afraid.

And this event is good news for everyone because it brings great joy. So if you need some joy in your life this morning, lasting joy, eternal joy, and resilient joy, it is only obtained through this news.

This good news. This gospel comes from God. And it has within it the power of God to destroy the darkness. To overcome any darkness, all darkness with his glorious light.

It has within it the power of God. It has within it the power of God. It has within it the power to rescue anyone from anything. It contains the power of God for salvation. So your sorrow, however acute, contains joy upon hearing and heeding this good news.

[ 10 : 09 ] Do not be afraid. Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David the Saviour is Christ the Lord.

The good news is a baby. God's gospel, his good news is a person. It seems, doesn't it, so anticlimactic. Such an anticlimax.

The good news of great joy for all people is a tiny little baby. A baby born in a manger. And he alone is God's gospel. He alone is God's good news to overwhelm any and every darkness forever. And so the angel tells us that this child is good news of great joy for all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David the Saviour. This child is good news for you. Because he's born to save you. He's born to rescue you.

[ 11 : 09 ] The baby's born to deliver us from evil. To deliver us from death. To save us from suffering. And this child is the Saviour of the world. And he enters into our darkness.

And into our mess. And he offers to fix it for us. To be the light that our lives need. So how can a baby born in Bethlehem.

Two thousand years ago fix our world today. How can this child fix the mess that you've got yourself into? How can he save us?

How can he save us all? How can he save us all? How can he go to that? How can he save us all? For unto you is born this day in the city of David. A Saviour who is Christ the Lord. The baby is no normal child.

Because the baby is not merely just a newborn baby boy. He is Christ the Lord. He is God's anointed king.

[ 12 : 09 ] He is God's chosen king. The child the angel is telling you is royalty. And where does he rule? He rules the kingdom of heaven.

And he is being born on earth. And he is bringing his heavenly kingdom here. The kingdom of darkness has been invaded by the kingdom of God.

And leading the charge is God's king here. He extends the boundaries of his kingdom to include the world. And not only is he Christ the king of the kingdom of heaven.

But he is also the Lord. The word can be master. The word can be boss. But it is also the word that God's people use to describe God himself.

And what you find here is that the word Lord. Which the angel uses to describe Jesus. It is an abbreviated form referring to God. It is suggesting the angel in describing this child.

[ 13 : 12 ] This baby. Helpless baby. Lying in the manger. He is God himself. The angel announces in verse 11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David.

The saviour who is Christ the Lord. And so he can save. And he will save his people. Because he is the king of God's kingdom. And he is God himself.

And that is why this child will be called Emmanuel. Which means God with us. And that is the good news of Christmas. That is the gospel in the abbreviated form of the Christian faith.

That God is with us. That God has come to see us. To break through and bring his kingdom to us. As we languish in a dark world. And he can do it because he is God.

And that is good news of great joy for all people. So don't be afraid. God has come to save his people.

[ 14 : 14 ] To bring his righteous reign to you. To rescue you forever. And the gospel as we read them. Shows Jesus undoing the sin and suffering of life on earth.

The gospel shows you the depths. That God is willing to go to save you. That he is willing to die for you. To sacrifice his own life. To redeem and rescue your life.

It is great news isn't it? That God is not silent towards you this morning. We are not like in the box groping around to find what God is like. No.

He tells us I have come to be with you. To pour my joy upon you. And he speaks to us through his words. He lays down his life to show you the depths of his love.

And so this morning on this Christmas day. You cannot hear the good news in the remaining trouble. You've hewn the gospel. The good news of great joy.

[ 15 : 13 ] For all people. That a saviour has come. Who is Christ the Lord. And so you have a choice to make. You can have to switch off. You can reject the message.

You can dismiss the news. And live out your life as if Christmas never happened. And millions upon millions of people choose to do that. And that is the path that leads to death.

And to darkness. And you discover on that path to your horror. That Jesus is good news. And it actually did happen. And he really is Lord and King.

But you've turned your back on that. And you've turned your back on the love of God. Extended towards you in Jesus. And alternatively you can do what the angels do.

What the shepherds do. And you can go to the manger. This morning. And you can discover the baby. You can look and ponder and contemplate.

[16:18] The possibility. That though this utterly ridiculous. Seemingly impossible story. Might actually be true.

It might actually be news. That God has come to be with us. And that God has come to save us. And God has come to bring his kingdom to us. And you can test the gospel. To see if it is good news. And you can experience for yourself. That when you draw near to Christ.

In faith and belief. He fills you with great joy. You see God came at Christmas. But he offers himself to come to you today.

That if you accept the Bethlehem baby. As your saviour and your Lord. You are promised in God's word. To receive the Holy Spirit. That God himself.

[17:19] Will come and dwell. In you today. And this gift of the Holy Spirit. Living within you. Is the proof of this message. It is the guarantee. Of the gospel's truth.

And one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Is joy. So you can experience. This Christian revelation. It is really good news.

It is good news. Which brings great joy. Even for you today. Wherever you are. And for everyone else. Who will receive it. It is an amazing.

Christmas present. That is being offered. To you. On the seemingly. Worst of Christmases. That we are invited. To become God's temple. That houses.

It is on the spirit. Right now. Despite your darkness. Today. You can experience. God's light.

Shining. Upon you.

[18:17] Dawning on you. And so. Hear God's news. And rejoice in it. And praise God for it. And experience it. Experience God's great joy.

In the light of his life. It is for many of us. Isn't it? A really disappointing Christmas. But in the context.

Of disappointing. Disastrous days. It is then. That God's light. Shines. Most brightly. And so. God's messenger.

Through his word. Comes to you this morning. And proclaims to you. Do not. Do not. Be afraid. For behold.

I bring you. Good news. Of great joy. That will be for all people. For unto you. Is born. This day.

[19:14] In the city. Of David. A saviour. Who is Christ. The Lord. Of all the people said. Amen.