

Luke 2:10-11

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[0 : 00] To be seated and open your Bibles to Luke chapter 2. To be seated and open your Bibles to Luke chapter 2.

And then there are those parents who think that their children are out of this world. And they think that their children can sing better than Beyonce. They think that their children can play better than Messi.

And I guess for some parents, maybe for all of us, to some degree we live out our hopes and dreams through our children. You couldn't do it, but you think maybe with a bit of encouragement they can.

But let's push it. When push comes to shove, there is only one set of parents who could actually say without a shadow of doubt that their child, their kid was out of this world, literally.

At Jesus Christ, who came from heaven itself. And at the birth of any child, there's usually a huge amount of fuss, isn't there?

[1 : 27] Camera, presence, videos, phone calls. But at the birth of Jesus, the angel of the Lord turns up and makes this massive announcement to shepherds. As he'd already done to Elizabeth and Mary.

Look at chapter 2 and verse 10. The angel says this. 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 a saviour who is Christ the Lord. God wants the shepherds to know.

He wants you to know this Christmas day that this child born in Bethlehem is good news. It's always good news, isn't it, when a child is born. We've had a number of babies born this year in church life. It's always a joy to get that text message, to get that phone call. But this is uniquely good news. The kind of good news that the word literally was only used at the birth of an emperor.

[2 : 30] It's good news because the waiting is over. Some of you children, you've been waiting, haven't you, for Christmas to come. There's been a countdown. But Israel had been waiting.

Today, finally. Today, on that first Christmas day. Today, today in the town of David, a saviour has been born to you. And at that moment in history, 2,000 years ago for us, the long-awaited saviour had finally arrived.

He'd been a long time coming. The Bible is 66 books. It's not a collection of proverbs and myths and nice sayings. It's an unfolding story that starts with creation and finishes with the new creation.

The message of the Bible is basically God made this world. We broke it. Jesus fixes it. And that's the storyline of the Bible.

But scattered right through the Bible are promises. And so, for example, 2,000 years ago, before the Christmas day, the first Christmas day, God had said to Abraham, Through you a son will come, and your seed will bless the whole of the world.

[3 : 49] That was 2,000 years before the first Christmas. 1,000 years before the first Christmas, God had said to King David in 2 Samuel 7, That from you will come a king, and his kingdom will never end, and he'll be on the throne forever.

And death will be no more. Then 500 years before the first Christmas, the prophet Micah said when that king comes, he's going to be born in one place, and one place only, and that place will be a place called Bethlehem.

The waiting has been long. Some of us have got long journeys ahead of us this week to visit family, and you will hear little cries from the back, won't you?

Are we there yet? When are we going to get there? And that's the cry of the Old Testament. Are we there yet? When are we going to get there?

They knew that God's king would come. He would come, and he would fix this world. This world that has gone wrong. He would deal with my problems, and forgive my sins.

[4 : 58] They just didn't know when. And then we're told, Can you see it? Luke chapter 2, verse 11. And to you this day, in the town of David, a saviour has been born to you.

And I know it's old news for us, isn't it? That's not new news for you this morning. It's not old news. It's old news for us, but it's still good news. Let me tell you why it's good news. Let me break it up. It's good news because he is a saviour. And I tell you, we need to be saved as much today as we ever have. We need to be forgiven today as much as we ever have.

You've got to know this. You've got to know this today, that there is nothing that you have done that cannot be forgiven by Jesus Christ. Let me say that again.

There is nothing that you have done that cannot be forgiven you this morning if you receive Jesus Christ. Because today is born this day in the city of David a saviour.

[6 : 09] And it's good news, not only that he's a saviour, but he is God's king. Somebody who is in charge of this crazy world. Do you remember last Christmas?

Last Christmas, we just survived, didn't we? This kind of next flood of COVID that they thought was going to come through. And we thought, didn't we, we'd come out of the pandemic and it would be happy times again.

Life returning back to normal. But this year, we've seen an international crisis. War in Ukraine. Global fallout. Three prime ministers. Political instability.

The death of the queen. And England yet again losing the France in the World Cup. A cost of living crisis. Climate anxiety after record heat waves.

Do you remember them? But the message of Christmas Day is that this world is not going to stay as it is. So much grief, and yet that grief will be dealt with.

[7 : 13] And you need to know that God is coming back to take charge of this world. A world that has thumbed its nose at him. And it begins on this day in Bethlehem with the birth of his son.

The son of the most high God. God has come to make himself known. And he's come with the express purpose that you would have a relationship with him, but on his terms.

But notice how God fulfills his promise. Every Bible believing Israelite knew that God's appointed king had to be born in Bethlehem.

But how does it happen? A couple called Mary and Joseph who are betrothed to be married are living in Nazareth. But they end up giving birth 80 miles away in Bethlehem.

Remember there's no public transport much like today. There are no cars, no motorbikes, no scooters, just a donkey and walking.

[8 : 14] And it's not as if Joseph is reading Micah one day and thinks, flip Mary, we better get to Bethlehem. You need to have the baby there. That's not how it happened.

Look at chapter 2 and verse 1. Look at the larger canvas. In those days the decree went out from Caesar Augustus the emperor that all the world should be registered. That there should be a census.

So first of all God says 500 years before Jesus is born when God's king comes he will be born in Bethlehem. The month before he's born or six months before he's born God works in the heart of the emperor Caesar Augustus in Rome.

2,000 kilometers away from Bethlehem and gets him to do a census. It affects the whole of the Roman Empire and on the edge of that Roman Empire a young couple Joseph and Mary who are originally from Bethlehem have got to go back to their hometown and register.

Also this amazing prophecy could be fulfilled. So God promised 500 years before God works in the heart of an emperor to organize a census and God brings a teenage couple from Nazareth so that in her final trimester she is there and she gives birth to fulfill God's prophecy.

[9 : 41] So God is a God who makes promises and keeps them. The Bible is not a story of myths. We're not in the realm of Star Trek a long, long time ago in Bethlehem in a Bethlehem far, far away.

No, you're dealing with fact. You're dealing with promises made by God in one period of history and fulfilled in another. You can be assured. And so let's not miss the phrase.

Look with me at chapter 2 verse 11 again. For unto you Isn't that a funny phrase? Unto you Born to you Is born this day in the city of David a saviour who is Christ the Lord.

Born to do you good. Martin Luther the German reformer he said this he said why is it when I go into the garden all the birds fly away from me as if I mean to do them harm.

Why do they do that? He said I've not come to do them harm but I go into the garden and the birds fly away from me. You know what that's like. If you've got an air rifle it's fair enough isn't it?

[10:58] The birds scatter. But this one born on Christmas day who came to save not condemn you why is it when I go into the garden all the birds fly away do I mean to do them harm?

Why do they do that? Why is it that when I mention Jesus the name of Jesus my friends they want to change the subject as if Jesus means them harm.

Could it be right now as I begin to speak to you about the Lord Jesus you find yourself intentionally distracted. I'm not going to think about that you say. I'm not going to allow myself to go there.

Maybe you're thinking I'm too ashamed.

I don't think I can be safe with him. Maybe you think as I talk about the Lord Jesus to you you think I know that I can't be forgiven you don't know what I've done.

Could it be that you're so upset with God that there's an empty space at the family table and you're angry with him and you're blaming God?

[12:11] Could it be that you're kind of afraid that if you put your trust in this wonderful saviour that he'll ask to be lord of your life and to be in charge and you will lose rights over your life? Or maybe you're thinking I just don't want to be disappointed again because it really is a broken world and there's so much over promising in our world and under delivering.

I quite like the film The Incredibles do you know the film The Incredibles? It's a good film as that.

And at the beginning of the film the main character who's imaginatively called Mr. Incredible he's going from one scene to another saving and rescuing people.

He's saving this person and that person. And this is what Mr. Incredible says right at the start of the film he says you just rescue one and then there's another it's never ending.

No matter how many times you've saved the world it always manages to get back in jeopardy again. Sometimes I just want it to stay saved.

You know just for a little bit I feel like the maid I just cleaned up this mess can you not keep it clean for ten minutes? And I think he captures what we want this world to be we want this world just to be saved for ten minutes or so just to be alright.

[13:31] and you don't have to think about the whole world you just have to think about your world for a minute. That everything just seems so right doesn't it?

And then it goes wrong. I don't know what your Christmas morning has been like maybe it's been the picture perfect Christmas morning but I promise you it won't stay like that. And God's word comes to you this morning and God says I've not simply come to save you but to save this universe. He's come to put right the beginning of the story is little you but the end of the story is the beginning of a whole new world.

A new creation where there's no more pain or crying or grief and that's God's agenda with you in it if only you would take his hand.

And because it's good news it always comes with great joy. Whenever you meet the angels meet the shepherds the angels scare the living daylights out of the shepherds. And the first thing the angel says is do not be afraid and then he talks to them about the Lord Jesus and the response is always great joy.

[14:47] I don't know when you were born when you were born there was probably a great deal of fuss made about you loads of photographs. Particularly if you're child number one many child number one if you're child number one there's loads of photographs aren't there?

I was child number four. You're lucky if you can find four, ten baby photos. But when you were born I can tell you what didn't happen. Verse 13 didn't happen.

In my house especially mum and dad think you are. And suddenly there was an angel and a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

A whole army of angels burst onto the scene. And what I love is this what is good for us peace on earth is good for God glory to God.

One is not at the expense of the other our God is a very pro-human God and to glorify him is to do good to people. And to do good to people is to glorify him.

[15:50] And when you were born the angels didn't cry out about that. I'm sorry. There's no recording in the Bible of angels rejoicing at my birth or yours.

But what the Bible says is this when you are born again then the angels kick into gear. Jesus says that in Luke 15 he says I tell you there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents. And since Jesus who was born on that first Christmas day is the saviour of the world we need to trust him that's the call. And since Jesus who was born on the first Christmas day is Lord and King we need to obey him.

And when you do that as many of you have as Jesus becomes your Lord and your saviour the Bible deems you to be born again. Because nothing more than a fresh start has happened.

And when that happens the angels in heaven rejoice and your heart is filled with joy. And Peter says 1 Peter 1.8 we are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

[17 : 02] A joy so wonderful we can't put it into words. I think one of the dangers on a day like this is that you confuse happiness and joy. If you've not been born again by God's Spirit you've not known this joy.

If you've not accepted Jesus as your Lord and saviour you will know of happiness. Yes. That's a human experience but you will not yet know of joy. Because joy is the single unique Christian emotion.

Let me give you a definition as I round up. A deep profound experience of thankfulness at the certainty of being saved by Jesus from hell.

That's where joy springs from. a deep and profound experience of thankfulness at the certainty of being rescued by Jesus from hell. And unless you have the Lord Jesus you can't have that joy.

In fact you can't get it any other way. So that means you can be depressed this morning but you can have that joy. Members of this church struggle with anxiety and depression like everyone else.

[18 : 15] People in this church go up and down. Sometimes it feels like an up and down club. And I need to be really careful this morning that I don't over promise.

I'm not promising you in the gospel permanent 24-7 happiness. But what I am saying to you is that in the highs and lows of life there is this joy.

this deep profound experience of thankfulness at being rescued by Jesus from hell. And there is no greater joy than that.

When the saviour comes praise and thankfulness follow verse 20 the shepherds turn up and confirm everything the angel says when they meet baby Jesus and Mary and Joseph.

We're told that the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all they'd heard and seen as it had been told them back to our verse I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people for unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour for all people.

[19 : 21] In this church there are about 40 nationalities and people have come to Jesus from very different backgrounds at very different stages of life. People who've been broken others who've not been particularly broken.

they've just been persuaded by the facts of Jesus. People have come when they're happy and they've come when they're sad. Some people have come when they're doing really well in business some have come when they're flat broke.

People have come when they're healthy and fit and others when they're unhealthy and sick. And all have found themselves worshipping this Jesus. And when Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem there was no room was there in that guest house for Jesus.

And I wonder this morning if there is room for Jesus in that heart of yours. There's a big difference isn't there between singing about Jesus as the saviour of the world that would be just another Christmas.

And useless to you unless you understand that Jesus is my saviour and my Lord. Galatians 2.20 is one of my favourite verses. It says this.

[20 : 37] Let me read it to you. The life I live I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

You see the truth is this morning there is nothing that you have done that can't be forgiven. God so loved the world that's wonderful but God so loved me that's unbelievable.

Have you done that? Have you made Jesus your saviour and your Lord that you may know the joy of his forgiveness that you may know the joy of God God being your father and of heaven being your home.

let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's