

He is here!

Luke 2:8-20 & Hebrews 1:1-3

*Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of Life, Thou Light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.*

25.12.24 Christmas morning: He is here! Luke 2:8-20 & Heb 1:1-3

Can you picture the scene?! A group of shepherds, looking after their sheep. It's night-time, only the stars give them any light. Then, suddenly, a brilliant light shines around them and they see an angel, a messenger from God, who starts to speak to them! No wonder the shepherds are terrified! But what an honour! ***"I bring you good news of great joy for all the people."*** Not just for the shepherds, but every one of God's people.

And what is the news? A baby has been born! In the village where King David was born long ago, and where God had promised his own special king would be born, who would be like a shepherd himself to his people, who will bring them peace. Now the angel-messenger tells them more: This baby will grow up to be a Saviour.

If you think about it, you will ask, ***What is he going to save us from? We live in a dark world,*** where we see hurt and hatred, sickness and death, where so many are sad, have no hope or real joy. Why? Because we've turned our backs on God, and just want to go our own way. And a fine mess we've made of his world, and of our lives. ***We need to be saved from this. To have a way we can become right with God,*** be forgiven and receive God's love and welcome forever.

Jesus was sent to be our Saviour, who will "provide purification for our sins" (Heb 1:3) and then rule as God's King. So the angel says, ***"He is the Messiah"***, that is, ***God's own promised King.*** And, more wonderful still, ***"He is the Lord"***. In him, ***God is present with us,*** showing us his love and his kingly power, to bless, heal and restore ***us to become his people in reality.***

Suddenly, there was more than one angel – there was a great army of them, singing God's praises, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men on whom his favour rests." But these angels did not stay; they left the shepherds and went back to heaven.

What did those shepherds do? They said to each other, ***"Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about."*** So, they hurried off – and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby. For they had

been told he would be discovered lying in an animal's feeding trough – a *mangeoire*! And it was so!

What a message for each of us! Jesus is no longer a baby, nor is he lying in a manger – but ***he is still alive – we can talk to him*** – and *we can ask him to come into our lives and hearts*, to be with us always. If we receive him like that, God assures us, *we will become his children*, his own sons and daughters. (John 1:12) ***Do you know him like that?*** Why not talk to Jesus now? He is here with us and waits for us to talk to him.

Lord Jesus, thank you for coming to us in great humility, as a baby. Thank you for coming to be my Saviour! Lord, I know that I need your forgiveness for the wrong things I have done, and the wrong thoughts I have had. Please forgive me. Please come into my heart and life and make me a child of God, to love and serve you. Amen.

What else did those shepherds do? *They told everyone* what they had seen and heard, and then they returned, glorifying and praising God. And that too, is a challenge to each of us. If we've discovered God's love in Jesus, and welcomed him into our hearts, and found the difference that makes in our lives, we will want to tell others, and we will want to thank God and praise him for his love and forgiveness.

Now - let's sing his praises! That's the easy part, to praise God in church. ***Will we do that in the coming week?***