

Christmas Day 2025

When was the last time somebody brought you good news. I think the last bit of good news I have been given recently was from Karen when she relayed the good, but very expected, news that she had passed her diploma, and that she will graduate sometime next year and not have to worry about retaking a year or two.

We long for good news, and in fact many now don't watch the news because there is never any good news. Sadly, good news doesn't sell newspapers or make headlines on the TV. What was the last bit of good news that you can remember headlining the evening news, and that doesn't include the downfall of a political party member from the party you don't support.

We have just heard from in the first reading today Isaiah announcing, how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace and who brings good news. The writing in Isaiah is thought to have been written some 500 to 700 years before the birth of Jesus, obviously, therefore, Isaiah is not written by the same person, but yet the words talk about the messenger who is to come, the messenger who turned out to be whom we are celebrating the birth of here today.

Many authors in the Old Testament write about the one who is to come to bring salvation to all, that the expected Messiah will one day come to earth to save mankind. We hear from the Letter to the Hebrews how God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets. The author of the book of Hebrews is unknown, although it is very often attributed to Saint Paul as one of his letters, however, whoever the author is, they write that God has spoken through a Son, a Son who also created the worlds.

There is no mention of the word Trinity in the bible, only descriptions which raise the idea of the Holy Trinity, the understanding that God the Father is the same as God the Son, who is the same as God the Holy Spirit. This writing in Hebrews we heard earlier is one such piece of work, the suggestion that the Son also created the world. But we know that Jesus was not named during the creation stories, so if Jesus wasn't named anywhere in the Old Testament how do we know he was there.

Well, the first chapter of John, perhaps explains how. In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the Word was God, He was in the beginning with God. It is widely felt that this is talking about Jesus, and established Jesus's eternal nature, his divine identity and his central role in God's plan, connecting him to the creation stories right through to the book of revelation. So, when Jesus said that he had not come to earth to change the life and theology of the Jewish people, but just to build on this, it's because their life and theology had already been based upon who and what he was, without them even knowing it. The Jewish believers had been worshipping God the Son along with God the Father all the way through time.

But what God did come down to earth to change, as that newly born baby, was to bring light into the lives of all. A light that shone into the darkness, the darkness perhaps being the fear of death, a light that the darkness could not overcome. We come here today, and perhaps we come together every week, or perhaps every day, to give thanks that Jesus is in our life to give us light, and to also lighten our load, and to help us through all the darkness that life puts us through.

Jesus came to earth to form loving and joyful communities. The gospel stories tell us about the shepherds, perhaps the least educated and poorest in society, who were the first to witness this love and joy. Obviously there were no words of wisdom from the newly born messiah, but they returned to the flocks and communities with their life changed, they had experienced true joy, a joy which they felt the need to share. The wise men, after some one to two years of travel, only had that epiphany moment when they came and saw Jesus as a child in a house, as we hear in Matthew chapter 2, they had all the knowledge available in the world at the time, they knew scripture inside and out, but they only truly understood when they met the child Jesus, they too left and shared their joy.

What is it that makes you truly joyful. Apart from obviously being with Jane, I truly find an ultimate joy in being on my own walking behind my lawnmower. There is a simplicity, a repetition, and an inwardly still feeling when cutting the grass. It is also a truly me and God time, a time when there are no distractions, I have probably walked the equivalent of multiple times around the world, well perhaps a slight exaggeration, but I do it without thinking. It's like when a musician gets completely lost in a piece of music, playing it without thinking about the notes. It's like a familiar prayer when you can say the words and be somewhere else through the words. I like to think of Joy as being beyond happiness, a feeling that brings a total peace and a feeling that all will be well whatever happens, and that to me is when I truly meet God in my life, it is as if I am meeting him as the shepherds and the wise men did, and I suppose the result of which is standing here trying to encourage others to get to a similar point in their own life.

I wonder what it is that brings you that feeling. We sadly live in a world where our human desires and wants regularly get in the way of allowing us a true joy. So sometime in the next month, as we continue to have the crib up in our churches and I hope you do at home as well, try and concentrate on finding a place which the Joy of the birth of Jesus can bring you a peace that nothing else can bring.

After all, God came to earth as a human not for his own benefit but for ours, he came to bring life into each and every one of us, and we have to all find a way of allowing his life to become a major part in our life. And that is surely best of any good news, it is a news which should make the front pages of the papers year after year, but sadly a good news that is left to each and every one of us to share and spread. May this Christmas Day not only bring joy to you, but through your love of God, may you bring that Joy into the lives of others.