

The Parish of Wellow

Midnight Communion 2005

Luke 2: 8-18

The best Christmas present ever

Passage, Sermon Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these sermon notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during next week to consider the questions below.

1. Sermon Passage

Luke 2:8-18

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

11 Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests."

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

2. Sermon Notes

2.1 Introduction - Tommy's Story

- Tommy was a typical five year old he loved to get himself dirty and enjoyed especially the climbing frames at his local park.
- Tommy's idyllic world came to an abrupt end when tragically both of his parents were killed in a car crash by a drunk driver with the result that Tommy had to be looked after in an orphanage.
- One day about a year after the accident an important meeting was held to determine Tommy's future.
- A group of experts had assembled to judge whether a young childless couple who had seen Tommy at the orphanage could adopt him as their very own child.
- The panel were struck by what a lot of love this couple had in their hearts and the way they would share that love with Tommy.
- They agreed that this couple could adopt Tommy as their own son.

2.2 God's decision

God too has made a decision that affects our whole lives in the same kind of way that that group of experts made their decision about Tommy.

'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.' Luke 2:11

This decision:

- We celebrate on Christmas Day.
- Was made without our consent, without our knowledge, without our approval.
- Affects our lives now and for the rest of eternity.
- Was for God to send his only son to earth, for God to put skin on, so that we might have the opportunity to have eternal life.
- Was made out of love for us his creation.

- Meant that God decided to come to earth, to walk among us, to be like one of us, so that we could see in a very real way how much he loves us.
- Was made by God without consulting us, without asking our permission, without us really having anything to say about the matter.

God wants our salvation to be in his hands, not in ours.

2.3 The purpose of God's decision

- God decided that sending his son to earth having him walk among us, live with us, then die for our sins and rise on the third day, would be the only way that God the father could be reconciled with the children of his creation.
- So God decided to do this for us.
- God decided because he is a God of love, a God of mercy, a God of compassion.
- God made this kind of decision because he knew that we could not by our own merits, our own works, our own efforts make ourselves worthy in his eyes.
- God knew we could never live up to the perfection he wants, so he decided he would live up to that perfection himself, then punish himself for our sins, and then tell us that by believing in what he has done for us, we would be made right with him.

2.4 Christmas is a time of Celebration

Christmas is the one time when we celebrate God's Christmas present to us:

- the birth of his son.
- the gift of salvation that Jesus brings to those who claim to be his followers

However for many of us, this gift of Christmas is meaningless.

- We get so caught up in all the busyness of the season.
- We get so caught up in our own giving, in our own rush.

That we forget about Jesus and the gift of salvation.

2.5 God has done all the work for us.

To make this a joyous season we don't have to do anything. God has done all of that for us. What we do during this season, we should do out of love, out of an attitude that I want to do that as my response to what God out of love has done for me. This should not be a season of burdens, but a season of joy, a season of excitement, because of the great Christmas present God has given to each of us.

3. Questions to consider back at home

3.1 Imagine yourself as one of those shepherds - what might you be feeling?

3.2 In what sense was Jesus a Christmas present to those Jewish shepherds?

3.3 In what sense was Jesus a Christmas present to us today?

3.4 Why did God give those shepherds and us this Christmas present?

3.5 Why did God give those shepherds and us this Christmas present without asking the shepherds or us first?

If you would like to discuss these questions further please feel free to call me on 01761 432293

Matthew Street 25th December 2005