Unto You Is Born

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Preacher: Colin Dow

[0:01] Please turn with me this morning to Luke chapter 2 and verse 11. Luke chapter 2 and verse 11.

For unto you is born this day. Heavenly Father, we bow in your presence.
May your word be our rule, your spirit our teacher, and your greater glory our supreme concern.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.
For all that we live in an increasingly secular nation, Christmas retains its popularity. The very difference, of course, is what a secular Christmas really looks like.
We have Christmas trees and Christmas presents and the Christmas turkey and Christmas music.
But we have no Christ. We might wonder, what's the point of celebrating a Christian festival if there's no Christ to go along with it?
[1:14] Where's the good news of Christmas for us if there's no announcement of the birth of Christ? Well, the angels in Luke chapter 2, together with the shepherds, clearly thought different.

What brought them joy was the birth of Christ. We read that they rejoiced with exceeding joy. Why?
Because they got the presents they wanted under the tree on Christmas morning?
No. No. No. But because the Christ child had been born. A saviour who was Christ the Lord. In verse 11, the angels announced to the shepherd, For unto you is born.
Here is the good news of the gospel for us all this morning. Not just that the Christ has been born, but that he has been born to you.
He's been born to us. The emphasis we want to highlight in verse 11 are the words, And to you.
This is the good news of a Christian Christmas, which is for all people.
[2:30] The you too has been to us. The us who have been born a saviour to. Who is Christ the Lord.

Sorry for my bad grammar. Whoever we are today, there's good news for us in the words of the gospel. Unto you is born this day.
What we want to do today is to examine the kinds of people for whom the birth of Jesus is good news. The kind of people who in the birth of the Christ child, And through the birth of the Christ child, Experience the grace God gives in light, In giving light from the darkness, And life from the dead.
As we pass through Luke Acts, Let me highlight six kinds of people for whom this is good news. The tormented.
The enemy. The prodigal. The sinner. The outsider. And the hard man. I'm sure we can identify with at least one person from each of these groups.
[3:47] The message of the Christmas Christian gospel is this. For unto you is born. First of all, This is good news to the tormented.

To the tormented. The man who was called Legion. Cuts one of the most pathetic figures in the Bible. Who knows what he was like before he was possessed by evil spirits sent from hell.
He may have been a family man with a wife and children. He may have been the man next door with a neat lawn. A good job.
A nice house. But what happened to him was tragic. Having been possessed by these evil spirits. We read in Luke chapter 8 verse 26.
He became a beast. A beast. He tore his clothes. He cut himself. He cut himself with sharp stones. He lived dangerously. He lived in a graveyard.
[4:54] He had been completely dehumanized. And he lived in mental torment. Every day for him. Was the descent. Into Dante's inferno of hell.

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Everyone was afraid to go near him. Chained him up. They treated him like a dog. How pathetically tragic. The best news that people of his region could have heard was that Legion had killed himself. Because at least he'd no longer be their problem. And for him. He would have felt it was better to be dead. I wonder whether that's why he lived in the graveyard.
Because he really rather envied the dead. Today we'd lock him up in a mental asylum. We'd fill him with tranquilizers. Although given that it was not a mental illness that he was suffering from.
But demonic oppression. I'm not sure our drugs would have stopped him from wreaking havoc. Nothing. No one could get through to this man called Legion. Until he met with Jesus.
[6:06] With words of such love and power and grace. Jesus expelled these evil spirits. Who were destroying this man. Jesus sent them into a herd of pigs.

Who rushed to their deaths. And his friends now found the man who'd been called Legion. He was seated at Jesus' feet. He was dressed. He was in his right mind.
He was ready to go back to his family. And to reintegrate into normal society. This man for whom every day had been a living hell. Now had meaning.
Joy. And love in his life. And one can almost hear over this amazing story. In Luke chapter 8. The amazing story of Legion's miraculous healing.
The angel calling out over Legion. Legion. He is born unto you. He is born unto you.
[7:11] Although he didn't know it at the time. The birth of Jesus was good news for this tormented man. Perhaps today we're tormented.

Tormented by the guilt of yesterday. By the problems of today. By the fear of tomorrow. These are things that make every day for us a living descent.
Into Dante's inferno. Perhaps no one around you knows them. Only you know them. But they leave such a scar upon our psyches.
That as we look at ourselves in a mirror. We're ashamed of who we are. And who we become. Remember Legion. And what Jesus did for him.
And what Jesus did for Legion. He can do for us. This Christmas. Remember. The good news of the gospel. Announced by the angel. Is for us.
[8:07] He. He. Is born. Unto you. Good news. For the tormented. Good news also for the enemy.

Good news for the enemy. At no stage in the history of the church. Has it been under such threat. As it was. Under the persecuting terror. Of Saul of Tarsus.
Driven by religious zeal and hatred. Saul made it his mission in life. To destroy. To destroy. The Christian church. Religion can drive a man.
Absolutely mad. And this man. Saul of Tarsus. Was a madman. The spearhead of Judaism's hatred. Of Jesus Christ.
And his followers. He persecuted Christians. He imprisoned Christians. He exiled. And he murdered Christians. He was an evil.
[9:04] Evil man. An enemy. Enemy. Of the Christian church. He was an enemy of the church. Because he was an enemy. Of the gospel of grace.

The Christians in that church preached. Saul of Tarsus. Had been brought up. To be a strict follower. Of the traditions. Of the rabbis. And the legalism.
Of a religion. Which taught. That it was one's good works. And one's. Religious performance. Which earned salvation. He hated the idea. That a man.
Or a woman. Could be saved. Purely on account. Of their faith. To be told. That salvation. Is all of grace. And none of works. Made him physically sick.
Drove him mad. But one day. As he was making his way. To Damascus. To persecute. More Christians. He was stopped.
[9:58] In his tracks. By the risen Lord. Jesus Christ. A great light. Flashed in the sky. And Jesus appeared to him. And Jesus said to him. Saul.

Saul. Why are you persecuting me? In a flash. Saul knew he had been wrong. Saul. And that the Christ.
He had treated as an enemy. Was the Christ. Who loved him. And given himself. For him. Saul knew. That the gospel.
Of salvation. By grace alone. In Christ alone. Through faith alone. Was true. And that he'd been living a lie. His whole life. In that instant.

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It was almost as if. Saul heard the voice. Of the angel. Speaking into his heart. Saul of Tarsus. He is born.
[10:51] Unto you. You know. The most violent enemies. Of the gospel. Of Christ. Grace. Aren't to be found.

In today's pubs. And nightclubs. They're not. They're found. In today's churches. Mosques. And temples. Driven mad.
By religious zeal. On their own. In their own. Inner emptiness. Enemies of Christ. Weak havoc. Perhaps. The thought. That a person. Is justified. By God.
On the basis. Of their faith. In Christ. And not. Works for Christ. Perhaps. That makes us angry. But in those quiet moments. Of reflection.
When our conscience. Convicts us. Of just how wrong we are. And how no matter. How hard we try. We'll never reach God's standard. Lord. We hear the voice. Of the angel.
[11:46] In Luke chapter 2. Saying. Stop trying. Stop being an enemy. He is born unto you.

In those moments. We're challenged. To stop pretending. And start believing. In Christ instead. The third kind of person.
For whom this is good news. Is the prodigal. The prodigal. Now you'll know. The parable. The prodigal son. It's probably the most famous story. In the Bible. This young man. Had everything going for him.
But he made a mess of life. Although he was dearly loved. By his father. He abandoned home. And traveled. To a far off country. Where he wasted his inheritance. On wild living. His money.
Made him lots of friends. But when his money ran out. They abandoned him. Just as he had abandoned his father. This young man. Had everything. But now he had nothing.
[12:44] He was lost. He was far away from home. He ended up feeding pigs. He was so hungry. That he longed. To eat the husks. Even the pigs.

Refused to eat. There he is. Prodigal son. He's in the muck of a pigsty. That dearly loved young man. So blessed. To have had a stable.
And loving home. There he is now. He is. He is. He is. Feeding pigs. And he's. He's covered in. In dirty. Smelly pig waste. For us.
Before he'd listened to the sound. Of laughter. And love at home. All he could now hear. Was the snorting of the pigs. But then. He remembered how wrong he had been.
All he'd given up. He realized just how much his father really loved him. And he thought to himself. I'll go home now. Prodigal changed his mind.
[13:43] He was given a second chance. The prodigal. Was given a chance. To reverse the failure. That he had made of his life. One could almost hear. The voice of an angel.

Flying over that pigsty. Saying to that prodigal. Eating the husks. That even the pigs. Wouldn't attach. Saying to him.
Prodigal son. He is born unto you. He is born unto you. Perhaps this is where we are today. Or where we're directing.
Our lives toward today. Perhaps. As we look at our lives. We see ourselves. Heading the way the prodigal. Was headed. Making a mess of it all.
We might. Or might not. Have the wealth. And reputation. But we know that underneath it. We're prodigals. And we're sitting with the pigs. We turned our backs. On the faith.
[14:41] Our parents taught us. And the faith. They showed us. We've turned our backs. On the Jesus. Who from our youth. We've known. Loves us. The good news of the gospel is.

By faith. We have. A second chance. That Jesus still loves us. Though we do not love him anymore. That by trusting in him.
He can take us from the pigs. And he can take us home. For us. The good news. Of the gospel. This Christmas time. Is this. He is born.
Unto you. The fourth category. Of person. For whom. The birth of Christ. Is good news. Is the sinner. He is born.
To the sinner. In Luke 8. 36 onward. We read. We learn. A rather pathetic figure. She's called. A woman of the city. That's code. At the time.
[15:38] Of writing. For being a prostitute. Over the course. Of her life. She'd slept. With hundreds. Of men. Broken. And abused. Her life.

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Was a shell. Her self-worth. Had been shattered. By the vocation. She'd been forced into. To. They all knew her. Perhaps. Some of the Pharisees.
Who were present. That day. Condemning her. Had. Though they called her. A sinful woman. Had previously. Been her customers. Then of course.
In a male dominated. Society. Like first century. Judea. They viewed themselves. As innocent. It was always. The woman. Who took the blame.
As it is. In backwards. Societies. Today. Nevertheless. Gender issues. Put to one side. This woman. Of the city. This prostitute. Knew that she was a sinner.
[16:35] Far away from God. Her lifestyle. Disgusted her. And yet. Like a caged bird. She could not. Break free. No one. Took her seriously. To them.

She was an object. Of pleasure. Not a person. Precious to God. Made in his image. And dearly loved. Perhaps she hated herself. For what she'd become.
And she was filled with shame. And when she met with Jesus. She couldn't stop crying. She wept over his feet. And she dried his feet. With her hair.
And then she anointed. His feet with oil. Taken from an alabaster jar. Such expensive perfume. How many hundreds of men. How many hundreds of men.
Had she slept with. To afford perfume. Like this. And yet she gave it all. To Jesus. She was so ashamed of herself.
[17:32] She was so broken. On the inside. Out of everyone. Present that day. She alone. knew how much. Sin destroys. A person's humanity.

And yet to her. Jesus said. This. Ashamed. Woman. He said. Your sins are forgiven. Your faith has saved you.
Go in peace. She wasn't there. When the angels. Appeared to the shepherds. In Luke 2. She may wish she was.
But she wasn't. But over this. Unnamed woman. And to this unnamed woman. The angel says. Woman. He is born. Unto you.
The Christ child. Born of Mary. And laid in the manger. Was born. For people. Just like her. Who are disgusted. With themselves. And before God. Know that they're sinners.
[18:33] Now I don't guess. Any of us here. Have been trafficked. Forced to sell ourselves. Like this woman. Had been. But there are many of us. Here. Who know that we're sinners.

Whose lifestyle. Disgusts us. And yet. Like a caged bird. We cannot break free. The good news. Of the Christmas gospel. The gospel.
Of the Jesus. Born. Come. For us in Bethlehem. And crucified. For us outside Jerusalem. Is that he waits. To say over us. Your sins are forgiven.
Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Faith in him. See that's all. That's required today. The fifth category. The fifth category of person.
For whom. The birth of Christ. Is good news. Is the outsider. The outsider. Nobody likes. Nobody likes. Nobody likes. A leper. It was a hard and fast rule.
[19:45] In the Israel of the day. That lepers were to be avoided. Lest you caught their contagion. Those who had contracted leprosy. Were forced from their homes. And they had to live in leper colonies.

They were very much on the outside of society. They weren't allowed to go. Anywhere near a place of worship. They weren't allowed to go. Shopping in a marketplace. They weren't even allowed.
To socialize with normal people. They were ritually unclean. Nobody went near lepers. Nobody likes lepers. Make no mistake.
These were men and women. Who were very much on the outside of society. As often they still are today. And so when in Luke chapter 5. Jesus encountered a leper.
A leper rather. He meets a man. Who means less than nothing. To everybody. He's no one's friend. Who does he think he is.
[20:45] Expecting this young Jewish rabbi. To listen to him. Or even give him the time of day. But Jesus didn't treat this leper. Like everyone else did.

Jesus touched him. I think this is one of the most powerful phrases. In the Bible. Jesus reached out. And touched him.
Jesus was the first man. To have touched this leper. Since he started displaying. The symptoms of the scientific disease. We must never underestimate. Underestimate.

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And for us. Especially as Scottish males. This is a really important thing to say. We must never underestimate. The power of touch. In communicating genuine concern.
And a shared humanity. This man may be. On the outside. As far as everyone else is concerned. But by that touch. He's not outside to Jesus.
[21:45] Jesus. And then with the word of power. Jesus does the most unexpected thing. He says to the leper. Be clean. By doing so. Not only is he removing this man's leprosy.

He's giving the man his life back. He can now go from the outside of society. Back to the inside. Back to his home. Back to his job. Back to his family. The leper wasn't present that day.
When the shepherds announced. The birth of Jesus. But over this leper. The angel could easily have said. Leprous outsider. Who no one will touch.
He is born unto you. The Christ child born of the blessed virgin. Is for people just like him. Those on the margins and fringes of society.
The outsiders. Now again. None of us. To my knowledge. Have leprosy. Or any such disease. From which everybody else recoils.
[22:47] And yet. We may feel like outsiders. Perhaps today. Listen to me everyone. Perhaps today. We may feel that we don't fit in. With the norms of society.

Maybe it's nothing external about us. We just feel different. We feel that no one likes us. Because well. We're not like them. Perhaps it's our gender. Our confusion about gender.
Perhaps it's our. Our appearance. Perhaps it's our intellect. Or lack of. Perhaps it's the things. We just like to do. Whatever makes us feel different.
We don't belong anywhere. Our society is filled with outsiders. We most definitely feel. On the outside. Perhaps today. You feel in the outside of the church. The good news of the Christmas gospel.
Is that Jesus says. You may be. On the outside of society. Because of your gender. Because of the clothes you like to wear. Or the. The way you like to. Put your makeup on.
[23:47] Or whatever. But you're precious to me. And I came for people. Just like you. And so like the leper. We come to him. And we too hear the words.

Of the Christian. Christmas angel. Saying over us. He is born to you. By faith outsider. Come on the inside.
And then lastly. This Christmas message. Is good news. To the hard man. The tough guy. In the world of Paul's day.
There were. Fewer nastier. And tougher. Men. Than jailers. Most were ex-soldiers. Who having retired. From active duty. Used their.
Considable strength. To subdue prisoners. The Roman colony of Philippi. Was a big city. About the size of Aberdeen. And then its jails. Would have been filled. With all kinds of criminals.
[24:48] To oversee. The prison in Philippi. You would have had to be. A seriously tough guy. And not only. Did you need the strength. To keep criminals. Under control.

You needed to fulfill. The role of torturer. If a confession. Was required. By the city officials. It was your job. To obtain it.
By any. Means. Necessary. Whether the guy. Was guilty. Or whether he was innocent. You got him to confess. Through the way. You tortured him. Jailers were hardened men. For whom.
Inflicting pain. Was their daily business. They thought. Nothing of it. They were today's. Psychopaths. Only society. Paid them. For their services. The Philippian jailer.
In Acts chapter 16. Was a tough guy. He did what was commanded. By the city authorities. He was a seriously. Hard man. You don't want to meet. This guy.
[25:45] In a dark alley. But what was he like. On the inside. He was a family man. And presumably. His wife. And his children.

Saw a rather. More tender side. Perhaps. Like all the other. Hard men. In our society. And there are loads. They projected.
Their own. Inner. Inadequacies. And insecurities. In public. Displays. Of strength. And violence. To those. Who are vulnerable.
That's the way. It always is. With tough guys. Always. Lions. On the outside. Pussycats. On the inside. So.
Very. Out of control. On the inside. So. Very. Inadequate. And insecure. And so. I play the control game. With everyone else. On the outside.

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[26:42] But one fateful night. Everything changed. For this Philippian jailer. Having been ordered. To secure two Christians. Called Paul and Silas. In custody. And having placed them. In the deepest. Darkest dungeon.

With stalks. Around their feet. There was an earthquake. And. And. And. And the jail. And the jailer. When he saw. That. That. That all the doors. In the jail. Would open. And the chains.
Had been broken. He knew. That. If even one. Prisoner escaped. From his jail. His life. Was forfeit.
And so. He. Like the ground. On which he was. Standing. Began to shake.
Then it all came out. It always does. With a tough guy. Then it all came out. All his insecurities. And all his inadequacies.
All his inner fears. And all his inner doubts. This man. Was. Terrified. That's what happens. Always.
[27:38] With hard men. You see. There always comes. A time. In their lives. Maybe they've had. Too much. To drink. One night. And their facade.

Of strength. That they've worked. So hard. To project. Dissolves. And for the first ever time. Everyone sees. How weak. They really. Are. This tough guy.
Is the most pathetic. Of all the people. We've actually. Looked at this morning. And he falls down. And he shows everyone. His true self. He is really. So very insecure.
And so very inadequate. But if he'd been there. To hear the Christmas angel. In Luke chapter 2. How he would have rejoiced. In the good news. Christ is born.
Unto you. Not that you. You pretend. To be on the outside. But the real you.
[28:36] The insecure. And inadequate you. We all know hard men here. People who. Show no weakness.

And vulnerability. They project. An image of strength. They project this image. Of I have it all together. We must never. Let that image. Fool us. Because that's.
All it is. It's an image. It's not the reality. On the inside. These hard men. Are more broken. And more inadequate. Than. Anyone else.
The reason. They project. Such strength. On the outside. Is because of. How inadequate. They are. On the inside. The church.
Is. Full of. Hard men. Who don't like. Vulnerability. And project. And work hard. At projecting. Toughness. On the outside. But on the inside.
[29:34] Trembling wrecks. Can't tell you. How many times. I preached. Over the years. More in. Highland. Connegations. Where the men. Wouldn't become. Members. Because.

They were. Tough guys. But on the inside. We all knew. They were hiding. Their own inadequacies. And insecurities. And they were. They were just plain. Scared. The gospel.
Of Jesus Christ. Is good news. For the hard man. Because it. It tells us. You don't need. To pretend. Anymore. God knows. Who you are. In the inside. And to the inside.
You. The angel. Says. It's okay. To be really. You. To be insecure. And inadequate. Because Christ. Is born.
To you. God's. Not impressed. By our hard man. Images. He knows. Who we really are. And he sent his son. For people.
[30:30] Just like us. So. To the tormented. To the enemy. To the prodigal. To the sinner. To the outsider. To the hard man.

The child. Of the blessed. Virgin Mary. And laid in the manger. Was born. To them. He was born. To us. This is the good news. Of the Christian gospel. Jesus Christ.
And his gospel. Grace. Is its beating heart. And transforms. Our despair. Into delight. And our gloom. Into joy. Perhaps. We can identify.
This morning. Can we not. With at least. One category. Of person. For whom. The Christmas gospel. Is good news. Perhaps. We can hear. The voice of the angels. Saying to us.
Christ. Is born. To you. Now. All we must do. Is place our faith. In him. To ask him. To be our Christ. Our king. Our savior.
[31:26] And then. Whoever we are. Whatever we've done. Whatever we've. Pretended to be. He'll give us new hearts. He'll make us new people.

Because that ultimately. And surely. Is the greatest. Of all. Christmas. Ahm. Our Milk.■■. P■■ thatumps. Amen.
After Ever...

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