

Carol Service Message 2023

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Preacher: Lesley Morison

[0 : 0 0] I'm just showing you that really to sort of show how this is almost part of our culture now. Whether or not you're a Christian, that you take part in a nativity play, because this is part of what Christmas is about when you're a school child.

But it's more than that, isn't it? You know, this light-hearted, poignant little play that is so important to children. It's far more important than that.

And one thing we do know, Jesus was born. He was born, and he was born in poverty. And all the lovely furry and fluffy stables and the nice fluffy manger wouldn't have been like that at all.

It would have been, either they reckon now it wasn't a stable as an England stable. It might have been a cave, or it might have been the lower part of a house where animals kept.

But he was, nevertheless, laid in a manger that animals feed from, because they were poor. And they were almost displaced in the sense that they had to walk about 75 miles to register.

[1 : 1 0] May I have the next slide, please? What I'm trying to say is that through the ages, this story has evolved. And people through the ages have tried to encapsulate this, the wonder of God coming to Earth as a human being.

And you can see it transcends all cultures and nationalities. And also ages. You can just have a look at these lovely pictures. There's one, this is obviously Coptic, very, very early.

And once again, the pictures have all got the same, it's the same story, just in a different way. Next slide, please, Richard. And once again, transcends colour.

Right at the top must be the early Coptic Ethiopian painting, a more modern one down here. And it's showing, basically, that as a people, as human beings, we try to think what Jesus would have looked like.

We try to show the wonder of his birth through pictures and these wonderful paintings. And we try to show Jesus in a way that we can identify with him.

[2 : 2 7] But none of us knew what Jesus looked like. I doubt whether he had blonde hair and blue eyes if he came from that part there. But we don't know what he looked like until we get to glory.

We won't. But people have tried very much to show Jesus that we can identify with. But do we need to? Do we need to see his face?

I would suggest that we don't. Because I read once that Jesus' love does not need a face. But a heart. It is in the expressions of the heart, through helping, caring and healing, that we witness God.

And this is what Jesus looks like. It's the way that we are to each other, the way that we care about each other. The expressions of the heart. If we really want to see Jesus, we really want to know Jesus, then we need to look in our own hearts and look at each other.

The expressions of the heart. And the real search begins by looking within and seeing the image of Jesus Christ etched in our own hearts, waiting to be released in our love and care for each other.

[3 : 42] And also remember, Jesus was born, Jesus was put in a manger. And a manger is used to feed the animals. Jesus is the bread of life.

And just as the animals fed of the manger, we can feed through Jesus Christ. Because he is the bread of life. And whatever we need, we can go to him and know that we can be fulfilled.

So that's just something to think about as we finish our cows. But I'd like to finish with a video. It's a song that Liz actually sent to me.

And I was really taken with it. And I think it fits very, very much in what I've just said. I think we'll just listen to it. And it's got words. And then after that, we're going to go and just reflect on it as we listen to this lovely song.

Then after that, we're going to go straight into Oh Holy Night. And Michelle is going to sing the first verse. And we will join in the second verse after that.

[4 : 44] So just sit and relax and listen to the song. Thank you.