

# Christmas Day - Good News of Great Joy For All People - 25th December 2022

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Date: 25 December 2022

Preacher: Matt Wallace

[ 0 : 00 ] A little kind of thing that we try and do, I guess, on Christmas morning is retell the Christmas story. A little bit of a twist, I suppose. So I thought this morning I'd set us the challenge of listening very well because I'm going to say the Christmas story, but we're going to include 70 different TV shows in the retelling of the story.

All right. And when I mention a TV show, what you've got to do is shout out if you recognize the name of the TV show and you get a chocolate coin or two. All right. So are you ready?

Do you need a countdown this morning? See, that's two there. Countdown and this morning. All right. Well done. Here we go. Anyone else get those? There you go, Paul. There you go. Ready, steady, go?

There you go. See, that's the level. That's the level. All right. So one day an angel, no angel fancy. There you go, Jan. Well done. An angel appeared to Mary.

Hello, hello, he said. Oh. Well done, Marie. Have I got news for you, Mary? There you go, Chris. Take heart.

[ 1 : 09 ] Are you shouting my age here? You know, yeah. Bit of Tony Hart there. Take heart because you're going to have a baby. Goodness gracious me, said Mary. Mary. Well done, heaven. Goodness gracious me, said Mary.

How? Yes. Yes, Bob. How, she said. Joseph and I are not Mr. and Mrs. yet. Well, there was no time for sex education.

Any Netflix fans? There you go, Bruce. Well done. So the angel said to Mary, well, some mothers do have them. There we go. Well done. God has given you a mission.

Impossible as it may seem. Not many stranger things have happened. You watch that, Bob. Not many stranger things have happened, I grant you.

But you'll be an absolutely fabulous mum. So, Mary, is it deal or no deal? We need some hands up. Come on, we need to have some chocolates here.

[ 2 : 13 ] All right. Please, sir, replied Mary. Let it be as you have said, for this is my line of duty. Deal.

Well done, mate. Meanwhile, after Joseph found out Mary was expecting, the voice of an angel. Oh, very good, very good. At the back, well done, well done. The voice of an angel spoke to him in a dream.

Mary's not one of those loose women, said the angel. So don't think you've been framed, Joseph. Come on, Pauline. Well done. Don't worry about keeping up appearances.

Oh, there you go. Don't worry about keeping up appearances or being the fool guy, because God, ah, back in the day, there you go, Carl. Colt Seavers and all that. Don't worry about keeping up appearances, being the fool guy, because God will bless you and bless this house.

There you go. Well done. Well, opportunity knocks, said Joseph. Happy days. There we go. All right. Anymore. Come on. Come on. Spread these out.

[ 3 : 16 ] Let's have it. Too young for chocolate. There you go, Dave. All right. Now, about this time, a Roman census was taken of family fortunes, which meant Mary and Joseph had to leave their neighbors and...

Ah, well done. Well done. Had to leave their neighbors and home, and away they went to Bethlehem. Look at that. Well done. However, when they arrived, they were severely outnumbered, because location, location, location after location was a full house.

Oh, there you go. And they were so busy. This is pointless, thought Joseph, as he reached tipping point. Another one.

Pass the one if you want. But a kind soul showed them to a stable, which was open all hours. Oh, Georgie. Even though only fools and horses would stay there.

Surprise, surprise, though. Mary gave... Mary gave birth to a baby there and then, with no time even to call the midwife. The midwife fan's gone, Karen.

[ 4 : 33 ] There we go. Meanwhile, in nearby fields, angels appeared to shepherds, singing songs of praise to God. Glory to God in the high-de-highest heaven, they said.

Ho-dee-ho. And I'm one at the back. Well done. Don't worry if there's a touch of frost or you haven't shone the sheep. Go and see the Savior, Jesus, who has been born.

He's the one show in town. So, in from the country, filed these shepherds and met this crackerjack of a baby.

The one who'd come to bring them love, joy, peace, and hope. Love... Okay, okay. A little later still, some wise men were observing the sky at night.

Yes! Yes! Go on, Anne. Watching a star trek its way across the... Anybody else? Come on. Andrew at the back. Good.

[ 5 : 35 ] Well, good catch. Well done. Watching a star trek its way across the panorama above them. Yeah, a bit boring for Christmas Day, that one. At the back there. Signifying that a new king had been born.

Now, travelling across the big country, these... Yeah, you see? It's a little bit dated, some of these. I know. It's my age. These exotic East Enders arrived in Jerusalem.

God, Ian. There you go. These exotic East Enders arrived in Jerusalem, assuming the prime suspect who would wear the crown... There's two there. Two there. Pauline, you're very keen, I'll tell you what.

Open your hands up. There you go. Happy Christmas. Happy Christmas. Assuming the prime suspect who would wear the crown would be from Jerusalem. But after realising King Herod was the weakest link in this Game of Thrones...

Well done, mate. They decided to leave Jerusalem and take the high road to Bethlehem instead. Who wants a chocolate cord? Come on, people. Bob, you're keen on this one.

[ 6 : 37 ] There you go. So they came, bearing a bonanza of gifts for the new baby. And they ended up going for gold, frankincense, and going for gold.

Well done. Bit of Henry Kelly there. On placing these gifts before Jesus, Joseph said, Top gear that. Cheers. Yes, Dave. Two for one there.

Well done. Well done. Now, Joseph, when he saw the gifts, he was tempted to flog it if the price is right. But the wise men said that if he could only connect in his head what these gifts were about, he'd appreciate that Jesus opened up a highway to heaven.

There we go. Yes. Now, last little bit. Although Mary, Joseph, and Jesus soon needed to escape to the country of Egypt to... Well done.

To avoid becoming a casualty of King Herod's jealousy, as time goes by, they were able to... We're scraping the barrel here, aren't we? There we go.

[ 7 : 41 ] They were able to return to their house in... House? Well done. Well done, Jim. Yes. In Nazareth, where Jesus grew up to eventually offer a place in the Son's love.

It's tenuous, but yeah. For all who answered a call to become friends with God through him. There you go, Bob. All right. And that's the end of our little story there.

Well done. Thank you. All right. More chocolates to come, I'm sure. But I just figured, actually, with all the...

It's a bit of fun, I know, on Christmas morning. But in some ways, it makes use of my telly-addicted past, scraping the barrel there with some of those TV shows. But I guess even in these times when there are so many different shows and TV programs, YouTube stuff to watch, we can still feel so excited, I guess, about a particular program or a YouTuber that we just have to tell family and friends about.

You know, we get quite passionate. We want to share the joy, if you like, or the way in which something which has really entertained us or informed us has touched us. We want to tell others about the programs that we love.

[ 8 : 54 ] When we see something good, we want to tell others about it. And just to turn it back to the Christmas story, I think it's interesting that after the shepherds had visited the newborn baby Jesus, we're told this, that when they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.

And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. See, yes, these shepherds, I guess, were used to watching their flocks by night and all that. But I guess that wasn't exactly an experience they felt compelled to talk about, you know, compelled to share with others. Watching flocks was one thing. But instead seeing Jesus, well, that was an altogether different experience because these shepherds were bursting, it seems, to tell everyone about him. And why did they want to tell everyone about Jesus? Well, because as the angel who appeared said to them, declaring, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Good news of great joy for all the people. And I guess that tells us that from the word go, Jesus was, is, and always will be this good news of great joy for all people.

[ 10 : 09 ] Again, why might that be the case? Well, I think it's because Jesus comes into the world not to make us feel worse about ourselves, but to affirm the fact that you and I are loved by God more than we can possibly imagine.

Jesus comes into the world not to depress us about how bad things might be, but instead to show us how to grow the goodness of God here on earth as it is in heaven.

Jesus comes into the world not to help us to escape the world in order to find God, but to instead, I think, recognize the presence of God here with us now, a presence which is in evidence whenever and wherever there is kindness and generosity and love being shared.

And Jesus comes into the world ultimately not to condemn it, but to affirm the inherent worth and wonder of this life. In that, even in the midst of so much that is difficult, there will always, always, always be signs of new life bursting through, new opportunities as we've been thinking for hope, peace, joy, and love to be shown.

And put all that together, I think that's why the shepherds were so keen to spread the word about Jesus because they knew the life-changing difference that God coming to live with us makes for our lives because we live not in isolation or desperation, any of those things, but with the God who is behind and beside and before us in all we do.

[ 11 : 48 ] And so in the midst of all that this day is going to bring for us, whatever we're up to, whether we're helping with the meal next door, whether we're at home with friends or family, whether we're spending it on our own, I pray, I think, for us, for you and for me this Christmas time, that we might encounter Jesus in ways which speak of his loving kindness, so much so that we can't help but follow the shepherd's lead in feeling compelled in our own way to spread the word about the good news of great joy which Jesus, coming to be God with us, means for us and for our world.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.