

It's a Boy

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[0 : 00] Grab a seat, folks. Grab a seat. Little Giuseppe really wanted a bicycle for Christmas.

And it was a week before Christmas, and it wasn't looking good. And so he knew his friends were riding to Santa, so he thought he'd do one better. And he started writing a letter to Jesus. He said, got out a sheet of paper, Dear baby Jesus, I promise to be a good boy for one whole year. Please give me a bicycle for Christmas.

And he looked at it and he thought, One whole year? That's a long time. So he screwed up that letter and he threw it away and he got a fresh sheet of paper out and he wrote, Dear baby Jesus, I promise to be a good boy for one whole month.

Please, all I want is a bicycle. He looked at it and he thought, Wow, a month? Gee, that's a long time.

[1 : 17] So he screwed it up and he started again. Dear baby Jesus, I promise I'll be a good boy for one whole week. May I have a bicycle for Christmas.

And he thought, A week? That's still a very long time. So he sat there and then he had a brainstorm. He went downstairs and on the mantle there was a small nativity scene.

And he took the statue of the Virgin Mary off that up into his room and he wrapped it in a towel and he put it in the darkest corner of his closet. He got out a fresh sheet of paper and wrote, Dear to Jesus, if you ever want to see your mother again.

Now, it's clear that little Giuseppe really didn't get his place in the world and in the order of things between creator and creation.

And he's not alone in this. I mean, Christmas is a fabulous time. I'm a Christmas guy. I love Christmas. But in the fog and madness of Christmas, it is easy to do everything except remember the namesake of this holiday season.

[2 : 42] So let us stop and quiet our minds for a few moments and think about the implications of the passages that are being read to us this afternoon.

I particularly want to think about the implications of the passage read directly before us, the Luke passage. Where the angel comes to visit Mary. I think there are four big implications of this. Four big ideas that come out of this. The first big idea is this. There is a God. There is a God. And if this is true, wouldn't it be weird?

Wouldn't it be odd to relegate God to the suburbs of our life to push him out to the edges? Let me give you a very real life example.

Imagine if Elvis Presley did actually fake his own death. All right? Imagine if he faked his own death 25, 30 years ago and moved to Vancouver and became a house cleaner.

[3 : 47] And let's say he was your house cleaner every second Thursday who'd come and clean your house for you. And let's say a friend came over at the same time that Elvis was cleaning your house and they said, oh my goodness, it's Elvis Presley.

And you're like, yeah, sure. And they'd be like, well, you know, what's he like? What do you guys talk about? This is just awesome. And imagine if you were sort of, um, I don't really know what he's like to be honest.

I mean, I'm fond of him, does a pretty good job, but I kind of just let him be. He does his thing and I do mine.

I mean, wouldn't that be odd? Wouldn't that be strange to have access to this incredible person and not do much with it? Wouldn't that be strange?

Christianity is, is unique amongst the faiths. And one of the things that's very unique about it is that the founder of our faith, Jesus, is God.

[4 : 54] He's not a prophet. He's not just a man with really great ideas. He is God, which means we can't just respect him.

We can't just be fond of him. We can't like the idea of thinking about him. He's God. Buddha, Muhammad, they were men. You can visit their graves.

You can visit their graves. You can like their stuff. You can respect them, but you don't have to follow them because they were just men. But if the passages we're reading are true and this is God, it really makes no sense to push him out for the edges, does it?

That would be a bit weird when you state it like that. The second big implication is this. There is a God. You are not him. You are not God.

And you might be sitting there thinking, well, of course, Aaron. Of course I'm not God. But let me ask you this question. Who gets to decide, ultimately, what is right or wrong in your life?

[6 : 04] If it is you, then you have made yourself the God of your life. You have made yourself God. And given our previous statement, you may have to rethink that situation.

The third implication. God cares very deeply for us. This God who is real, who is not you, cares very deeply for you.

Why do I say this? Well, I've already said that the founder of the Christian faith is higher than any other founder. The passage we're looking at calls him most high. Most high.

You cannot get higher than the most high. So he is higher than any other founder of any other religion. But we see his great love for us and that he came lower than any other religion claims God has done.

Christianity is the only religion where God became a baby. This is Jesus, the Christmas story. This is the baby that we're talking about in our passage here.

[7 : 09] God became vulnerable. A fragile human being who could be hurt, who could be tortured, who could be killed. And he was all of these things.

What kind of God would do that? One that loves you dearly and one that wants to be in a relationship with you. The last implication of all of this.

We can choose how we respond to this announcement that there is a God who has entered our world. And I think Mary's response is a great model for us.

First, there was a healthy skepticism. Now, a healthy skepticism is different to an unhealthy skepticism. A healthy skepticism says, I've got questions, but I'm open.

An unhealthy one says, I have questions, but I don't really want answers because I want to remain in charge of my life. Now, Mary had a healthy skepticism. It was a skepticism, though.

[8 : 09] When the angel Gabriel turned up, she didn't go, oh, yes, of course, yes, I've heard about this. So, Gabriel, is it? Can I call you Gabe? Well, here's my womb. I don't know how this works, but, you know, great.

I'm willing to give birth to the God of the universe. No, obviously she had questions. Verse 29 says that she was troubled at first. She tried to discern what was going on.

She asked questions, very reasonable questions, like, how am I going to get pregnant? I'm a virgin. She took stock of the situation. She had healthy doubts, but after consideration of what was going on, she moved from a healthy skepticism to a place of surrender.

If there is a God, then surrender is a very reasonable response. In fact, it's the obvious response, and it's the only response.

And we see this in the last verse of our passage read here. there's this beautiful verse, Behold, I'm the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

[9 : 18] In summary, there is a God who is not you, but cares deeply for you. If this is true, and the writer of Luke presents it as truth, as historical fact, and 2,000 years later, a billion people around the world also believe it's true, how are you going to respond when you surrender your life to him?

I hope so. Perhaps you have doubts. Perhaps you have a healthy skepticism, like Mary. If so, and you want to explore some questions you have about faith, I have very sneakily snuck in my email address on the back of this.

If you have questions, email me. I'd love to chat to you about it. If you want a space to explore these questions, a couple of times a year I run a course called Christianity Explored.

Seven weeks long, one night a week, I cook you a lovely meal, we watch a short video, we have a lovely chat. You have a great time, lots of laughs, real answers to very real questions that you might have.

I'm running one early next year. Please email me if you'd like to participate in that. It's completely free. Just a reminder, there is a God, it's not you, but he cares deeply for you.
[10 : 52] So much so that he entered your world to show you how much he cared. And that's all from me. Merry Christmas, everybody.