

CHRISTMAS UNWRAPPED (Week 2): BETHLEHEM (part I)

“Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened” (Luke 2:15)

Here are some questions you might like to consider—it is not necessary to cover everything!

1. What did you find particularly interesting in the video? What new things did you discover?

Read together the Bible passage about the birth of Jesus: Luke 2:4-20.

2. Are there further insights from the video which help you to understand this story in a new way?
3. Try to imagine the scene at the birth of Jesus.
 - a. What is Mary thinking and feeling? In Nazareth she had said to the angel, “Be it unto me as you have said” (Luke 1.38), but why now was the “Son of God”(Luke 1.35) being born ‘in a manger’ (Luke 2:12). How might her expectations have been dashed by the way thing had turned out?
 - b. Try to get inside Joseph’s mind too!
 - c. What speaks to us today from this story?
5. Note how God ‘spills the beans’ of the Good News both to outsiders (the shepherds) and to the oppressed (all those under Roman rule). How are we sharing the good news of the Good News with those who are outsiders or oppressed today?
6. The birth stories also reveal to us a God who speaks—through angels and dreams (Matt. 1:20-24; 2:12; 2:13; 2:19; Luke 2:9). In what ways does God speak to us today? Would you say you have heard God speak to you? And, if so, how good are we at listening and obeying? Share your experiences of ‘hearing’ or ‘not hearing’.
7. In Luke 2:11 Jesus is described by the angels as “a Saviour”, “Christ” (the Messiah) and “the Lord”. How will remembering these titles for Jesus enhance and enliven our Christmas celebrations this year?

Prayers

- Take some time to share and encourage each other with any recent experiences or receiving good news of some kind and say a prayer of thanks to God.

A concluding prayer:

Dear God, we thank you that you sent your Son Jesus to be our Messiah and Saviour. We thank you that this is still good news for us today. We pray that this Advent you would rekindle the joy in us that this news should bring; and that we would marvel once again that you have sent your only Son that the world might be saved. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen

During the week: Try to think about any individuals or groups of people who are the oppressed and outsiders in our community today. How can you bring Good News to them this week?