

Devotional Blog – Sunday 27th December 2020

I am writing this blog at the beginning of Christmas week. The weekend that has just past has seen the introduction of the new tier 4, which effects many people, including ourselves. Tier 4 is essentially “lockdown” for those areas where the virus is spreading more rapidly, and the sudden announcement last Saturday left a lot of people’s plans for celebrating the festive season in chaos.

Many people who thought they were going to visit family and friends found themselves hurriedly visiting the supermarket to purchase some Christmas fare, while others were expecting a house full now how rather a lot of turkey spare!!

For some, Christmas 2020, will be remembered as a rather messy affair with arrangements being changed at what appeared to be the eleventh hour. For the family at the centre of the first Christmas, messy sums up the situation quite well. What could be messier than giving birth among all the farm animals. Changing the baby would also have been a rather interesting experience!! Was this the birth of “messy church”!!

But out of the chaotic and messy Christmas, zoom and facetime rode to the rescue. Carol and Christmas services could be enjoyed from the comfort of our living rooms as we joined together in worshipping the Christ-child, it was certainly a very different experience. iPads will adorn many Christmas dinner tables as we try to create a “being together” experience.

Although it is a traditional at this time of year for families to gather together, it is worth reminding ourselves that families and friends are not just for Christmas!! This is also true for Jesus’ family. They did not stay in the stable for too long, life moved on.

In Luke 2:21 we read that eight days after the birth Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord and to offer a sacrifice, which was in keeping with the law. We are then introduced to Simeon, who is described as a righteous and devout man.

Although we are not told how old Simeon was, he must have been getting on a bit as it appears, he was almost waiting to die. Luke explains that the Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not do so until he had seen the Lord’s Christ (2:26). Without any word of introduction from the parents, Simeon took the baby in his arms and praised God.

He was now ready to meet his maker. Like all doting parents, Mary and Joseph were chuffed to hear the words spoken about “their” son. In verses 39 & 40 we learn that they returned to the family home in Nazareth – life moved on.

Christmas is a time to revisit the birth of our saviour, but once the celebrations are over, and the decorations come down - life moves on, whatever it holds for us in the coming days. But like Simeon we can take comfort in the fact that we have met with the Lord’s Christ during this period.

Life, I guess will remain messy and unpredictable, especially in the next few months, but the light of the world that came down to earth on that first Christmas, goes before us to light up the way ahead.

Paul Barker

Hampton Mission Partnership