

Luke 2.1-20

Is Christmas a mirror, or a window?

Christ Church Selly Park

Monday 25 December 2023

Christmas Day

The Mirror

I wonder what your best memories of Christmas are?

My best Christmas memories are from when I was growing up. Mum used to buy a new board game every year and we would play it after lunch on Christmas Day. One of the best was the year she bought a Star Trek Game, though my Dad and sister weren't so thrilled! The worst was the year she bought the Dickens Game... sorry if there are any fans here today... we really didn't enjoy it!

When I was at primary school we lived in Hull, and after the Christmas Day service we would pile into the car and drive three hours South to my grandparents' house for lunch. Most years we missed Grandad's infamous turkey soup starter, but were just in time for turkey with all the trimmings.

But the best bit was the next morning. My Grandad was an early riser, and he used to get up and hide the pieces of a gingerbread house. My sister and I would get up, everyone else fast asleep, and he would give us a clue to the location of the first piece. To my mind we crept silently round the house – but I suspect we weren't as quiet as I remember – and with each piece we found there was a clue to the location of the next piece – until we had them all laid out on the kitchen table, at which point we would assemble the house together.

I'm sure we all have lots of Christmas memories – some good, some bad – and they all crowd in when Christmas approaches.

It's like a mirror *face away from congregation and hold up the mirror*. Behind us are all our Christmases past and present – some wonderful, some less so. But the thing about a mirror is: there's a lot of people and stuff in it, but who's front and centre? *We* are. *Turn round and put the mirror on the lectern facing the congregation*.

Maybe you insist on having Christmas the way you want it – or resent others for stopping you having the Christmas you want. Maybe you're stressed about all the things you have to do – even or especially if those things are for other people. Maybe your Christmas mirror is full of people you love – or sadly empty.

The Window

But what if Christmas isn't a mirror?

What if someone *else* is the hero of Christmas? What if, instead of you, instead of tinsel, turkey and too much mulled wine, instead of family, instead of presents – what if, instead of being a mirror for all your Christmas ghosts, with you front and centre, what if Christmas could be *turn mirror round* a window?

When we celebrate Christmas it feels *huge* – which is no doubt why people start trying to talk to me about it in September! But all those celebrations are nothing – *nothing* – compared to Jesus.

In our reading we heard about an army of angels filling the night sky, singing praises to God (13). That doesn't happen every day. In fact it's only happened once – on *that night*. Why? Because the most important thing that had ever happened since the day of creation had just happened: **'Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord,'** the angel told the shepherds (11). And they **hurried off** (16), leaving their flocks behind – because they knew that night: Jesus was the only thing that mattered, and they wanted to see him.

You see this baby is the most important person you could ever know. He grew up. He taught with authority. He healed the sick. He showed compassion to the lost. He was not the Messiah they expected, but he's the Saviour we all need.

This baby grew up to die, so we might have life – life as a gift, life stronger than death, life in all its fulness.

If you want to know that life for yourself, you need Jesus because it's only found in him, and we'd love to help you explore that in the New Year.

I hope you have a good Christmas, however you are spending it. But more than that, I pray this Christmas might be for you a window: a window to show you Jesus.