

## Luke 2

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[ 0 : 00 ] Okay, I've got a question for the children especially. Put your hand up if you've ever been to the cinema to see a film. Well, I think just about everybody's been to the cinema.

When I was a wee boy, we said we were going to the pictures. But when I say that now, my children laugh at me and say, what's that all about? So, to the cinema, to Union Square maybe. Anyway, well, that's good.

Well, I want to tell you about the very first time I went to the pictures. To the cinema, the very first time. I still remember because it was so exciting. Like, I really do remember all the details.

Who invited me, who I went with, where it was. And very especially, I remember the film. It was a pirate film. It was just amazing. This huge screen, it was like so big.

It was like a thousand TVs. And this huge screen and a pirate film. It was so exciting. And what do you need in every good pirate film?

[ 1 : 03 ] Any ideas? If you don't have this, it's not a proper pirate film. Yeah, what do we need? Pirates. Absolutely. A pirate film without pirates would just, it just wouldn't be the same, would it?

That's true. But I'm thinking of something else. Something else. Yes. A boat. A boat. Of course, you need a boat. Oh, there's so many things I hadn't even thought about.

But I'm thinking of something else. I'll give you a wee clue. What do pirates always look for? Treasure. Treasure.

That's it. Treasure. It wouldn't be a pirate film without treasure. And it's hidden treasure. And you've got to find it. In fact, I think a pirate film, you need three things.

Maybe other things as well, but three things you really need. You need pirates. You need a treasure, a hidden treasure. And you also need, I think, a secret map.

[ 2 : 02 ] Don't you? To find the treasure. There's always a map that gives clues and directions. And on the map, it says X marks the spot. And that's where the treasure is.

And so the pirates can hunt for their treasure. Well, this morning, we are going to go on a Christmas treasure hunt.

Are you up for that? A Christmas treasure hunt? Does that sound exciting? Yes. You're thinking we're going to move from the pews. No, you're not. You're all going to stay just where you are, but in your imagination, and you've all got great imaginations, we're all going to go on a Christmas treasure hunt.

Now, what did we say we needed? We needed pirates. Can we be the pirates? Okay. I've got one visual aid. I'm not into visual aids, but I do have one. Okay? There we go.

I'll be the lead pirate, okay? Right. That's Polly. We'll put Polly down. Okay. We'll just put her there. She's not very good at hunting for treasure. So we've got the pirates. We're all the pirates.

[ 3 : 07 ] The treasure, well, that's what we're going to find. So I can't tell you what that is yet because we still have to find it. And do you know what the secret map is? I'll tell you what it is. It's a passage in the Bible that we're going to read.

And in that passage, we're going to find where the treasure is. We're going to find how the treasure is mentioned. So we're going to read that. I'm going to read the verses in the Bible.

It's in Luke chapter 2. We already read the first seven verses. And we're going to pick up the reading in verse 8. And what you need to do as the pirates looking for the treasure, you need to listen very carefully and then find when you hear the word treasure being mentioned.

Okay? And then when you find it, well, that will be a big clue. And we can carry on from there. So you've got to listen very carefully and listen out for the word treasure. If you're old enough to read the Bible, you can follow the reading.

If not, you can listen and see when you hear the word treasure or a word that's very, very, very, very, very like treasure. Okay? Luke chapter 2. And we're going to read from verse 8.

[ 4 : 16 ] So this is our map that's going to help us find the treasure. And this is what it says. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about. So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in the manger.

[ 5 : 23 ] 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.

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Did you spot that? Did you spot the word treasure?

Yes. Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. So there you are in that verse.

X marks the spot of the treasure that we're looking for. Well, does that mean we've finished? We found the treasure and we can all go home. No, we've still got lots of work to do as pirates with this treasure.

You see, so far we've discovered who's got the treasure. Who's got the treasure? Who was it that... Mary. That's right. Mary's got the treasure. Now that's interesting, isn't it?

[ 6 : 22 ] Mary. We know Mary wasn't very rich. She wasn't very wealthy. She didn't have lots of silver and gold. When Mary and Joseph got to Bethlehem, they'd know where to stay. They didn't have money for some fancy hotel.

But we read in the passage that she has a treasure. And I wonder, where did she keep her treasure? Did she keep it in a treasure chest? Or did she keep it in a special hiding place? Or did she keep it under her bed? Where did she keep her treasure? In her heart. That's interesting. That's an interesting place to keep a treasure. That's what it says.

She treasured all these things in her heart. But you know, there's two things we still need to find out. In fact, they're the most important things. The first thing we need to find out is what was the treasure?

We found out who it belongs to, to Mary. We found out what it is. It's in her heart. But the most important thing, what is it? We don't know that yet. And that's what we need to find out. And we also need to find out what Mary did with her treasure.

[ 7 : 26 ] So that's what we're going to do now. Now, you need to be working hard here. We need to find some clues to help us discover what the treasure is.

Now, in the verse where X marks the spot, let's just read it again. See what it says. But Mary treasured up all these things.

She treasured up all these things. So the treasure is all these things. But we don't know what these things are. We need to find out what all these things are.

It's all a bit of a mystery so far. So I think we need to hunt a little bit more carefully. And what we're going to do is we're going to go back to our map, back to the verses. We're going to read two or three of them.

And as we read very carefully and listen very carefully, I think we'll discover what all these things are that were Mary's treasure. So let's read again from verse 16.

[ 8 : 29 ] We read, So the shepherds hurried off. The angels had appeared to the shepherds. And they've seen the angels. They've heard the angels. And we read that the shepherds hurried off.

And they found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in the manger. When they had seen the baby Jesus, they told everybody what they had been told about the baby.

And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. But Mary treasured up all these things. So all these things are what the shepherds had been told about the baby, about Jesus.

And who had told the shepherds about Jesus? The angels, that's right. So the angels told the shepherds all these things about Jesus. And the shepherds went to find Jesus.

And they told all the things that they'd heard about Jesus to Mary and Joseph and to any others who were there. And those are the things that Mary treasured up in her heart.

[ 9 : 32 ] The things that the angels had said to the shepherds. So we're getting there. But now we need to find out, well, what did the angels say to the shepherds?

Well, let's see. Let's see what did they say. The first thing that they said, the first thing, the first part of the treasure that Mary then kept in her heart was what we read in verse 10.

The angels appeared to the shepherds and they said, We bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Good news of great joy for all the people. That's the treasure. But what was the good news? Well, that's what we're told next. What do the angels say to the shepherds?

Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. And who sent this Savior?

[ 10 : 32 ] And who needs to be thanked for sending a Savior, for bringing this good news? Well, what do the angels sing? And who do they sing to? Well, we read that as well.

Glory to God in the highest. And on earth, peace to men on whom his favor rests. So, this is the treasure that Mary treasured up in her heart.

These things that she heard about her child Jesus. That it was good news for everybody. That a Savior had been born.

That Jesus was the Savior. He was Christ the Lord. And that the way to respond to such a wonderful gift, to such great news, is to praise God, like the angels did.

Glory to God in the highest. So, that's the treasure. But we have another task to perform. Mostly, when you have pirate films, when the pirates eventually find the treasure, well, that's when the film ends.

[ 11 : 34 ] You never find out what they do with the treasure. Well, that's a bit funny, isn't it? What's the point of having a treasure if you don't do something with the treasure? And we need to find out what Mary did with her treasure.

Because in the verse, the key verse where we have X marks, the spot, we're told what she did with her treasure. We'll read it again. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

She pondered on them. Now, that's a big word, isn't it? Pondered. I wonder what that means. Any idea what ponder means? I don't think I knew what ponder meant when I was a wee boy or even when I was a big boy.

Yes. What do you think ponder means? To think about. Yeah, to think very carefully. To ponder is to have something, to think about it very carefully, to think about what does that mean?

What does it mean for me? What should I do with that truth that I've heard? That's what it means to ponder. And what the Bible tells us is that that's what Mary did with her treasure.

[ 12 : 39 ] She thought about it very carefully, thinking about what does it mean? Why have the shepherds told me that this is good news for everybody?

Why have the shepherds told me that my baby Jesus is the Savior, that He's Christ the Lord? What does that mean? I'm not sure if I understand all of that.

So, she thought about it very carefully. She pondered about these things. That's what she did with her treasure.

Now, when Mary was thinking about these things, I'm sure she didn't understand everything. There were lots of things she couldn't understand. She didn't know exactly what it meant, everything that was being said about Jesus.

But she carried on thinking. She carried on wondering. And as the years went by, she understood more and more. And eventually, she did.

[ 13 : 37 ] In time, in God's time, she understood why it was that her baby Jesus, who grew to be a man, was the Savior of the world. And she grew to understand that her son Jesus had to die on the cross for us.

In fact, we're told that she was there. Imagine how painful that must have been for Mary to see her dear son die on the cross. But she, in time, understood that that was part of the good news, this good news that the angels talked about, good news for everybody, that a Savior had been born,

and that Savior had to die for sinners like us, all of us.

And that is part of the good news for everybody. And so, Mary had her treasure, and she thought about her treasure, and she came to understand what this good news was.

Well, that really is pretty much the end of our treasure hunt. But there's one other thing that we can do that I think would be good to do, and that's to ask one more question.

And the question is this. Do you think that the treasure that we read about there in the Bible was just for Mary? Was it just her treasure? What do you think?

[ 14 : 55 ] Just for Mary? No. Not just for Mary. We're told that she treasured up these things in her heart. But we can find from the clues in the passage that this treasure wasn't just for Mary.

Let's just remind ourselves what the angels said at the very beginning of the message that they brought to the shepherds, and that the shepherds then shared with Mary and Joseph.

What was the very first thing that they said? I bring you good news. Well, the very first thing they said was, Don't be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

For all the people. So this treasure, this good news about Jesus being born in Bethlehem, Christ the Lord, this good news was good news for all the people.

For everybody. Not just for Mary. It was very especially a treasure for Mary. But it was for everybody. And everybody includes you. And it includes me.

[ 15 : 59 ] It includes everybody here this morning. It was good news for everybody. The good news about Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem, is a precious treasure for everybody.

It's a great adventure of a lifetime finding more and more about Jesus. More and more about this great treasure. More and more of the good news about Jesus.

And where can we find this treasure? Well, the best place to find this treasure that's for us is in the Bible. The Bible isn't just a map that points us to where the treasure is.

The Bible itself is a treasure where we can find out more and more about Jesus. In fact, there's a verse in the Bible that says that in the Psalms that we sing.

One of the Psalms that we sing is Psalm 19. And what does the Bible say there about the words that we find in the Bible and the truths that we find in the Bible?

[ 17 : 02 ] It says this, that they are more precious than gold. When we think of a treasure that pirates find, treasure chest, it's full of gold coins.

Well, the Bible says that the treasure that we find in the Bible is more precious than gold, than much pure gold, sweeter than honey, than honey from the comb.

The Word of God, the Bible, is more precious than gold because in God's Word, in the Bible, we meet and discover our Savior Jesus, the one who was born in Bethlehem, the son of Mary and Joseph.

He is God's treasure from heaven for you and for me. So, that is our Christmas treasure hunt. And I hope and pray that all of us would know Jesus to be our greatest treasure, greater than anything else we might think is precious and valuable.

So, let's just bow our heads and let's pray. Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your Son, Jesus. We thank you that Jesus was eternally your precious treasure, the one you loved with an eternal love.

[ 18 : 20 ] And yet, we thank you for your great love for us, that you were willing to send your precious Son to be our Savior. We thank you that the good news concerning Jesus is indeed a treasure for us to store up in our hearts, that it would change our hearts and help us to know Jesus as our Lord and as our Savior.

We pray that Jesus would be for us that which is most precious, our greatest and richest treasure. And we pray all of these things in His name. Amen.

Well done. Now, I don't think Polly helped us much. Polly was sleeping all through the hunt. But anyway, she was very tired, I suppose. Now, we're going to sing again.

We're going to sing a psalm that we all know and that the children know very well also. Psalm 100 on page 131.

Psalm 100 on page 131. And we'll sing the whole of this psalm. We'll sing to the tune, Diodemata. Let's stand to the Lord with joy, all who to earth belong.

[ 19 : 31 ] Adore the Lord with joyful hearts, and come to Him in song. Let's stand to sing this psalm. Now that the Lord is gone.

Let's stand to sing this psalm. Let's stand to sing this psalm. Let's stand to sing this psalm.

Let's stand to sing this psalm.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and always. Amen.