

Luke 2

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[0 : 0 0] So, are you excited about Christmas? Who's excited about Christmas? Grown-ups are allowed to lift their hands up as well. Chris is excited. Sarah's excited. Good. I'm excited. Now, what's the most exciting part? Now, be honest. Don't tell me the right answer. What's the most exciting part, Matilda? There's so many things. You can't think of one. Getting presents under your Christmas tree. And having fun. There you go. There's two things. What do you think is the most exciting bit? Ah, what they are. That's cool, isn't it? Just sort of, just, you know. And then Dad says, no, you can't do that. That's cheating. Or does he? Does he let you do that? Hmm. That's pretty cool. And then, on Christmas morning, you can just open them up. What I like doing is destroying the paper. Some people in my house don't like that. They want us to take it off neatly. But no, that's no fun. You just take it off.

Just tear it off. Put it in the recycling. So, just, I thought I'd better clarify that. Anyway, presents. Presents is one of the cool things about Christmas. And of course, Christmas really is about celebrating the very best present of all. God gave his only son, Jesus, to come into the world to be our Savior. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son to be our Savior. But God gives us lots of presents. And I'm thinking about one of those presents.

In my head, I'm thinking about one of those presents. And I imagine that if I gave you all a bit of paper and said, write down, oh, let's say five presents that God gives us, I don't think that you'd put the one that I'm thinking about in my head. And so, I wonder if you could guess. I'll tell you there's a clue.

There's a clue. I'm thinking about this present. What is something we can do that God has given to us? He's given us the ability to, shout out, think. That's it. Yeah, that's a really amazing present.

Well, that's not very exciting. It really is. To be able to think is amazing. And that's something that God has given us. We're not robots. We've not all been programmed. We can think. We can read things and say, well, what does that mean? Or we can watch a program. Or we can have a conversation and we can think about what people are saying and what we're saying and what's going on. And that's an amazing present, an amazing ability that God has given us. And I want us to use that today. And I want us to use it as we think about the lovely carol that you have sung for us. So, we've heard you sing this carol a couple of times and again this morning. And I want to think about what the carol says about Jesus, the baby born in Bethlehem. And I think the carol, and you all know it really well because you've sung it, I think it teaches us three really important things about Jesus.

[3 : 1 4] It teaches us about who Jesus is. It teaches us about why Jesus came into the world. And it teaches us about how we should respond to Jesus. Those three things. So, let's go, let's start with the first one. The first thing that it teaches us is about who Jesus is. Now, I've got the words here because I don't know them off by heart like you guys do. And the second line says, well, I'll start from the beginning. Away in a manger, no crib for a bed, the baby king Jesus laid down his sweet head. So, the first thing that the carol tells us about who Jesus is, is that he's what? He's a? He's a king. That's right. So, that's the first thing it tells us, that Jesus is a king. Now, he doesn't seem like a king.

What do kings wear on their head? Just shout out. A crown. That's right. And where do kings live? In a castle or what else? A bit like a castle. A palace. That's right. Now, Jesus wasn't wearing a crown. Of course, he's just a little baby, of course. But he certainly wasn't in a castle or a palace. So, Jesus was a very special kind of king. A king who came to serve us. Jesus said, I haven't come to be served like most kings, but to serve, to serve you. So, he's a very special kind of king.

Now, what else does the carol tell us about who Jesus is? Well, the next line in the carol is, the stars he created looked down where he lay. So, what does that tell us about who Jesus is?

What does it tell us that he did? What did he make? He created. What did he create? All the? Just shout out. The stars. That's right. He created all the stars. And there are a lot of stars.

Millions and millions and millions and millions and millions and billions and billions and billions. There's so many. I was trying to think of something to compare it to, but I couldn't think of anything. That's the problem with stars. There's so many. You can't even say there's as many as, because there's just more. If you started counting, just imagine you could start counting the stars.

[5 : 26] And you started right now, okay? And you counted and you counted and you counted, not just all day today, but all through the holidays and every day of your life until you were old like me.

Even when you got to there, you still wouldn't have finished counting. There's that many stars. And what the Bible tells us, and what this carol picks up from the Bible, is that Jesus created all of those stars. So, it tells us that he's our king and it tells us that he's the creator. There's a verse in the Bible that says this in a letter that Paul wrote to the Colossians, and it says about Jesus, for by him, by Jesus, all things were created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

Everything was created by Jesus. Now, if Jesus created the stars and everything there is, well, what does that make Jesus? Well, what's the very first thing the Bible is saying? It says, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. So, if the Bible tells us that Jesus created everything, what the Bible is saying is that Jesus is God. He's the almighty, powerful God from all eternity, and God came into the world as a baby in Bethlehem. And that is amazing. So, he's the king, and he's the creator. But what else do we know? What else do we learn about who he is?

Well, in the next verse, it says, the cattle are lowing, our Savior awakes, our frailty he shows in the crying he makes. What does that tell us about who he is? Well, it tells us that Jesus Jesus was a normal baby. He cried like other babies. He's one of us, just like you and me. He is a man, a person. God became a man. He became a person in Jesus. And he cried just like all babies cry. He's a real person. About 10 days ago, I'm going to tell you a wee secret. But 10 days ago, I got dressed up, okay, and I pretended to be Santa. But it was just a disguise. I wasn't really Santa. I was just pretending. Now, some people thought I was Santa. I looked like Santa. I was fat enough to be Santa.

But I was just pretending. It was a disguise. I wasn't really Santa. You know, some people think that Jesus was pretending to be a man. It was just a disguise. But no, the Bible tells us that Jesus was a real person. And that's really important because it means that he can understand us.

[8 : 33] He's the creator of the universe. He's God. But he's also a man. And he knows what it means to be a person and what it is to live in this world with all the things that happen in this world.

He knows and he understands us. He's God and he's man at one and the same time. So there are things that we learn about who Jesus is. Let's see if we can remember what they are. First of all, we, the cattle, and of course it all comes from the Bible, it tells us that Jesus is a, what was the first thing? A king. That's right. But also that he's the creator and also that he's a real man or person. That's right. All of these things we learn about who Jesus is.

But the second thing that this song teaches, or that we can learn from, is why Jesus came. And let me just read one or two of the other things that the carol says and that you've been singing.

It says, Displaying His glory, though weak and so small, His life was an offering, a gift for us all. Displaying His glory.

Now, what does display mean? Well, let me give you an example. If maybe a footballer put on a really good performance, he put in a, oh, what would be the way people might talk about it?

[10 : 02] Somebody might say, well, that was a very impressive display. And what that means is that he showed people who were watching how good he was and all the things he's able to do.

It's a way of showing people who you are and what you're like. And what the carol is saying is that that's what Jesus did. He displayed who he was.

He displayed that he was the creator of the universe. He displayed the love of God and the mercy and the grace of God. All the amazing things about God were shown, were displayed in Jesus.

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, when he grew as a wee boy and then a teenager, and then when he became a man, and then when he was ministering in Galilee, when he was teaching the multitudes, when he was feeding the hungry, when he was healing the sick, in all of these ways he was displaying his glory.

He was displaying the glory of God, what God is like. But very especially when he went to the cross and died on the cross for us, he was displaying the glory of God, the love of God, the mercy of God.

[11 : 15] That's why he came to display his glory. But then the carol also says that his life was an offering, a gift for us all.

His life was an offering. That's what he came to do. He came to offer himself. Now what does that mean? Well, I think we could maybe say two things, and they're very connected. His life was an offering of service, of serving others, of serving us.

He came to serve. He came to love. He came to help. And he did that in so many ways that we've been thinking about. Healing the sick and feeding the hungry and all the miracles he performed were for other people, to help other people.

But his life was also an offering of sacrifice. His life itself was a sacrifice, but very especially when he went to die on the cross. He offered his life as a sacrifice for sin.

He died for our sins. He took the punishment that we deserve. And this was the offering that he made. This was the wonderful present that he made to us of his own life, handed over to death in our place.

[12 : 27] And now because he did that, because he took that punishment, he's able to forgive us. When we come and ask him to forgive us, he's able to do that because of what he did on the cross.

So we've learned a little bit about who Jesus is. He's the king. He's the creator. He's a real person, a real man. And we've learned a little bit from the carol of why he came.

To show us what God is like. To display his glory. And to be an offering, a gift for us all. And that leads me to the final thing I want to just share with you this morning.

And that is, what do we need to do in response to who Jesus is and what Jesus has done? Well, again, the carol can help us. It tells us that we've got to trust in Jesus.

Because listen to what the carol says as we sing it. Forgive us and free us to live by your grace. We've got to trust in Jesus as the one who is able and willing to forgive us.

[13 : 24] To come to him and ask him to forgive us. And he will. To trust in him. To trust in the promises that he makes to us. But also to live for Jesus.

Forgive us and free us to live by your grace. To live for him. To live lives that are pleasing to him. To live lives where we can tell others about Jesus. And about who he is and what he's done for sinners.

And also to worship Jesus. The final line of the carol that you sang. That we might adore you today and always. And we adore Jesus.

We worship Jesus. We praise Jesus in singing. But also in the lives that we live. Maybe especially in the lives that we live. When we leave church. And we go to school. And we go home.

And we look to live lives that are pleasing to him. In obedience to him. That is the way we can worship him. Today and always. So when you sing this song again.

[14 : 21] You can maybe be thinking about these things. I'm sure you've been thinking about them already. But now that we've thought about it a little bit more. We've used this wonderful present God has given us. To think. To work out some of the amazing truths.

That we find in the Bible. That are brought together in this carol. Away in a manger. No crib for a bed. The baby King Jesus laid down his sweet head.

Well let's just pray for a moment. Heavenly Father we do thank you. For the story of Christmas. We thank you for the coming of Jesus. We thank you for this amazing truth.

That the baby lying there in a manger. Is the very one who created the universe. Who created every star. Every last one of them.

And we thank you that he is the one who came into the world. Into the mire of this world. To save us. To rescue us. To pull us out. From that pit that we were in.

[15 : 20] And we thank you for his coming. We thank you for his life. We thank you for his death. And resurrection. And we thank you that even now. He's the one who's seated at the right hand of the Father.

Interceding for us. And we pray all of these things in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.