

WEEKLY SERMON

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New Year's Resolution

As I write this short sermon I'm just finishing my 10th day in isolation and looking back on a very quiet Christmas and New Year. I've had much time to think and sadly time to feel sorry for myself as my wife, who is extremely vulnerable and I live at opposite ends of the house, avoiding each other like the plague. It is ironic that I'm fairly sure I was infected at our church carol service along with a number of others.

When I'm feeling down I think back to a young couple who being homeless had to give birth in a stable. I'm even more thankful that, unlike them, I am not just about to become an asylum seeker in a foreign land. I remember that Our King Jesus was born in the poverty of a stable, not a palace, in a feed trough not a golden crib. He's a king who was persecuted from the start by the earthly King Herod, who tried to murder him. Jesus, Our King welcomed by normal working men, the shepherds. Worshipped by foreign potentates, the star gazing magi, but not recognised by the religious or political elite of His own land. A king who's only crown was to be made of thorns not gold, one who was born to die as a sacrifice for our sins. This, Our King, is more than a revelation, He is a revolution!

C S Lewis made this great statement about the first nativity, "God has landed on this enemy-occupied planet in human form". At that first Christmas God came into the world in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, to rescue us sinners from its appalling penalty and to bring us into a living relationship with Himself. Jesus would live without sin and through His perfect life meet all the demands of God's Holy law. Finally, He paid the horrific penalty that human sin deserves, death on the cross. Of course, that was not the end of the story, He rose again, conquering death and opening the way for us to eternal life with Him in heaven. We need to try and remember when times are tough or difficult, our Saviour, has been there, done that and got through it with the help of His Father in heaven and so can we if we have a personal relationship with God.

Our Lord Jesus did not come into this world merely to tell us what we have to do; He came to do for us what we couldn't do for ourselves-reconciliation-bringing sinful repentant people into a relationship with God. He became the son of man so that sons of men can become sons of God.

So what is my resolution? Put simply it's to get to know and understand my Saviour even better, in a context that is meaningful in Blackburn 2000 years after His death and in doing so hopefully encourage the rest of our congregation to do the same.

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HEALTHY CHURCHES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES