



The Boy Luke 2

NATIVITY PICTURE

So this evening we've heard the familiar words of the Christmas story and sung songs, some familiar and some not so familiar. We've done it in a very Christmassy way, with decorations, candles. And the like. And we've remembered the One that was born king, but in less than kingly surroundings.

I recently found the following video, which is produced by the Reformed Church of Hungary. To say the least, it's very gritty. It's about a young couple on a busy road near Christmas – let me leave the rest of it with you.

THE BOY

COUPLE ON ROAD

I told you it was a gritty story. Of course this story is designed to reflect a story from 2000 years ago in the guise of a modern couple seeking to find somewhere where the girl could have her baby. In the end, all they could find was the toilets of a motorway service area.

WITNESSES

It was witnessed by a prostitute, a policeman and a couple of lorry drivers, including the rather miserable-looking Cioban who picked them up but who melted when he saw the baby boy. But in truth, the details may have been different but it reflects the story of the first Christmas. The nativity is a dark story. Instead of toilets, the baby was born in some kind of stabling area – dirty, unhygienic.

SHEPHERDS AND ANGELS

The darkness of the video is made lighter by the sheep appearing on the scene. Into the darkness of that first Christmas came the angels bringing light and rejoicing.

TITLES OF JESUS

The boy born that Christmas night wasn't just any old child born to anonymous poor people – but the One who was called Immanuel, God with us. He was a descendent of David – with a legitimate claim on the Jewish throne. He was Jesus, the One who would save His people from their sins.

WITNESSES

But the witnesses, a load of people who were at the lowest level in society – shepherds who got the lousiest job of being on the night shift, sitting out in the fields looking after sheep rather than being in a nice warm bed. I would say that a better class of people visited later – magi from the east – but actually all they were were a load of eastern mystics rather than the noble kings we often sing about. Great! The Son of God comes into the world born as a baby and the people that visit are a load of riff-raff and religious weirdos.

But that's the whole thing. The news of the coming King wasn't given to the religious leaders and King Herod – who only wanted to kill Him anyway - but to ordinary folk who struggled with life and with faith – people whom others give scarcely a minute to.

What does it tell us about God? He's most interested not in righteous, or self-righteous people who think they are better than others, but ordinary people – in fact anyone who is prepared to listen to what He has to say to them and act on it. People like you and me.

COME AND WORSHIP

And what was God saying to them on that first Christmas? He gave them an announcement which invited them to check out. The shepherds were invited to go and find the baby. The magi knew the star was an invitation to go and worship the new-born king. And off they went.

INVITATION

Christmas is a time of invitation. God is giving each and every one of us an invitation this Christmas – the same as He has done for 2000 years. The reason why God became one of us was to die for each one of us so that the sins that keep us from God could be dealt with so that we might find forgiveness and be able to enter into a relationship with God. He did this because He loves us so much that He was prepared to deal with the issue of our sin, our wrongdoing, our weaknesses, our selfishness Himself. And that wasn't something trivial for Him. In becoming human, He became like everyone, right down to His rather grim birth in Bethlehem, His ordinary life, and His awful death. Actually, He got it worse than most of us.

CROSS

This is what the Bible says about Jesus: *Christ himself carried our sins in his body to the cross, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness. It is by his wounds that you have been healed. 1 Peter 2:24*

These are important words for everyone who follows Jesus, because we know that He has dealt with the issue of sin – everything that has kept us separate from God and now we know Him and follow Him.

INVITATION

The thing about most invitations is that they are RSVP "repondez s'il vous plait". If you want what the invitation is offering, you need to make a response.

This evening, in Jesus, the one who died and is now alive, God offers you forgiveness, He offers to be with you throughout life, He offers the personal family relationship of father to son, He offers you the assurance of eternal life.

And that is an offer for you today – are you willing to accept that invitation?

BLANK

Prayer.

My Lord and my God

I have lived my life the wrong way

I have done many wrong things

I turn away from all my sin.

Lord Jesus, I trust in You now to be my Saviour.

Thank you for dying in my place.

I ask you now for your gift of eternal life.

I give my life to you and want you to be my Lord.

Help me to live for you by the power of Your Holy Spirit.

These things I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen