

Christmas Day message 2010

(Begin with cartoon picture of shopping). That cartoon has a message that is funny but also contains a lot of truth. I'm sure if a stranger to our planet was asked to describe what happened at Christmas they would most likely talk about this hectic period of buying lots of gifts that was followed by a very short time when people gave away what they had bought, and received what others had bought in return. Mention that Christmas is coming and most of us do indeed begin to think about presents we need to buy. The sudden urge to shop.

The Bible tells us that such an urge was not there during that first Christmas.

Mary had the urge to obey. That was her number one urge. When this awesome angel told her about God's plan for her to be the mother of God the Son she was fearful, alarmed, amazed—but especially obedient. That's a good urge for us too to take on board at Christmas. In light of this awesome happening, to be obedient, whatever God asks of us.

The Shepherds had the urge to investigate the matter. When the angels who had announced to them the news of Christ's birth had left, they said, "Let's go and see". They had the urge to discover more about this baby and what His birth really meant for this world. That's not a bad urge to follow at Christmas. To decide to discover more about this Jesus who was born in a manger. To set yourself the challenge of reading the whole Gospel of Luke during this Christmas break so that you too may 'go and see this thing that has happened.

The wise men from the East went a little further than just an investigation. They did that all right after they had seen the star, but all the time it seems they had the urge to worship. This morning we have come to this place, I trust, with the urge to worship Him who is Christ the Lord. To bring to Him the gifts of love, adoration, and surrender.

It is important for us to realize however that the urge to obey, the urge to investigate, and the urge to worship were empty without the decision to believe. To believe that the baby born in the stable at Bethlehem was in fact the one promised for centuries. The chosen of God who existed before the

world began. The One who being God came into this world as a baby so that through the sacrifice of Himself upon a cross He could save each one from the judgment that is still to come.

My wife Judy is always on the lookout for beautiful Christmas directions and this year she found one that was both beautiful and so meaningful.(SLIDE)

It is the word believe. Without believing personally that Christmas is indeed about Almighty God becoming a man for my sake, Christmas is simply an Xmas. A party without the miracle of our Saviour's presence.

But to believe without any commitment to acting on that belief is just as empty. In that word believe is the letter I, and on that I is pictured the babe of Bethlehem. The only way to make Christmas count is to invite Jesus to be the centre of the I which is your life. That's something that only takes a moment and I would love to talk to you about, but it's a moment that will change your life forever. For then Jesus is no longer just a baby for you. He is the One our final song proclaims as your whole world who angels adore and whom you and I worship.