

Matthew Chapter 1 v 18 - 25 B

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[0 : 00] I said yesterday, and I hope you're all paying attention, that Christmas morning is a time when, if you've opened some presents or you've opened your stocking, you can bring it along to show us and to share it with us so we can see.

So, we'd like to see who's brought a present or two to show us and like to come up so we can see it. Who's going, you're going to come and show us? Come and show us up here.

Because, everybody likes to see. Can you come and stand up here for me? Like that. Lovely. Okay. What's your name? Susie. Susie. Okay.

Is your mum and dad here, Susie? Yeah. Are they? Point them out. There they are. Okay, lovely. Right. What have you got? What have you got? A key ring. A key ring. Well, that's not just any key ring.

Thank you. It's a glittery heart key ring. Is this, are you going to put your car keys on this one? Has dad bought you a car as well?

[0 : 58] Is that the next surprise when you get home? No? Oh, okay. What keys are you going to put on, do you think? Are you a latch door kid? Are you? They let you come home by yourself and you've got this. No.

Book bag for school. That's brilliant. I'm being naughty, aren't I? I'm only allowed to be naughty once a year at Christmas. Right. Okay. What's this? A wand. A wand? Oh, right.

It's sort of like a lightsaber without the light. Wow. Does it become a pencil as well? Is that right?

No. No? Just a wand. Lovely. Thank you, Susie.

That's super. Great. I like your ears as well. They're great. What else? Who's got something else? Yeah. Come on in. Come and show us. Come and show us.

Is it your Batman outfit? Is that, is that, come up here. Because, okay. Is this, is this for Christmas? No. No. Oh, this is. Wow. What is it? Ultimate clay.

[1 : 55] Ultimate clay. Okay. That looks like Lego. Is it sort of like Lego? Yeah. Brilliant. And he's got, are these his arms? Or these, what are these? Like helicopter?

Spinning blades. Spinning blades. Who does he fight against? The Magnum monsters. The Magnum monsters. Wow. And look, I think your, but let's get one as well. Yeah. I got Ultimate clay too.

You've got one as well. Yeah. Fantastic. That's brilliant. Thank you very much. That's great. There'll be no fighting in that house over who has it. Because have I got one each?

That's really, really sensible parenting, I think. Theo, are you going to come out? Are you going to come by yourself? No parents. Goodness me, you're brave.

It's going to be a good one. Self-confidence isn't your problem, is it? You don't like that, do you, Theo? You've got plenty of that, haven't you? What's this? A monster machine.

[2 : 52] What? Monster machine. A monster machine. Can you show me how it works? Can you show me on there? What does it do? It sort of does a wheelie. Is it one of those that you can pull back and it makes...

No. No, you just have to push it. They couldn't afford one of those with a motor in it, could they? No, they go, well, you've just got to push for exercise. That's great. Thank you very much, Theo.

And a t-shirt as well. All right. Have we got anybody else? Who else wants to come and show us? I'll try and be nice. Are you going to come, Mr. Elf?

You're going to come. You've got a wand as well. Well, come on, show us anyway, because we want to see your hat. We want to see your hat. Come on, stand up here. Lovely. Look at this. So you've got a wand as well.

Brilliant. That's fantastic. And you've got a super elf hat. Are these your real ears? Are they stuck on the outside? No. No. Ah, there they are, hidden underneath. Brilliant.

[3 : 53] Thank you. That's lovely. That's great. Okay. Oh, here we go. What have you got? Can I lift you up? Oh. I'll put you right up here.

I'll hold on to it. I promise you'll let that go. Exactly. Dolly! Just squeak. Crying, Dolly!

That's lovely! That's just like you. Do you cry? Do you make crying noises as well? No. You're very quiet.

You're very quiet, aren't you? You never make a noise. It's lovely. Thank you very much. Thank you very much. Anybody else? Any on the back row there?

Anybody? Big ones then. Love the next stage up. Big boys and girls. Adam. Yes. Well done, Adam.

[4 : 54] Well volunteered. Come on, Adam. Come on, Adam. Now, we know you want to. We know you love being up the front. I'll stand on here now and you can stand down there.

All right, little man. Yeah. What have you got? Wireless headphones. Wireless headphones.

Excellent. So, if you listen to something, why do you have a Bluetooth? Yeah.

Barry wants to borrow them. Okay. Go ahead. Okay. Do they work off Bluetooth as well? Yeah.

Great. You see that? Yeah, I knew about Bluetooth. What about Bluetooth?

Are they noise cancelling? Could be. Could be. Need them in your house. Yeah. Okay. It's okay.

Thanks, Adam. Who else? Last chance, Marnie?

Rachel? Come on. You've been coming up the front for the last 15 years, Rachel, to show us your presence. So, you can't stop now. Aren't you? No.

[5 : 55] I've got a phone case. A phone case. Can I read this phone case? No. No. No. No. No. No. No. No. Oh. She is clothed with strength and dignity. She can laugh at the days to come.

Proverbs 31. Excellent. A biblical phone case. That's a new one for me. That's great. Bible phone case. Okay. Is that everybody? Nobody wants else to come?

Nobody else. All right. Any grown-ups want to show off jumpers, t-shirts, hats, hearing aids, toupees? Any other? Mike's got what? A new top?

A new top. New mug. It's got me last year. It's got me last year. New mug. Is that Marnie's mug?

Yeah. Yorkshire born and bred with a Scottish mother and a Welsh father.

I don't think so, somehow. I'm proud of it. You're born in Yorkshire, but you're mixed otherwise. Lovely.

[6 : 52] Okay. Fantastic. Well, I hope that all those gifts will be enjoyed. And those that you've got yet to open. I know some of you open them after lunch as well. Just a couple of notices, really.

Just to say, there's no tea and coffee this morning, naturally. Everybody will be going back home for their lunches and things. We're meeting again Sunday. This coming Sunday morning and evening. New Year's Eve, can you believe it?

And particularly remind you if you're about next Sunday evening's a sharing time, a testimony time.

Just to look back on the year and give thanks to God for all the good things that he's given to us.

Now, every Christmas we take up an offering, which we give every part of to some Christian charity, some Christian work. And this morning we're going to take up an offering in a moment for Grace Community Church.

It's a small new church in Loftus, just about 20 minutes away. And they are reaching into that very needy community in Loftus, a mining community.

[7 : 53] And we've got a lot of contact with them there. And they're lovely brothers and sisters in Christ. So the offering is going to be taken up for that. And we're going to take up our offering now, remain seated and sing in the little purple book, Love Came Down at Christmas.

It's 215 in the purple book, Love Came Down. Love Came Down at Christmas.

Love Came Down at Christmas.

Don't worry. But if you do, we're going to read Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus. Matthew in chapter 1. Matthew in chapter 1 from verse 18.

Through to the end of the chapter. Matthew 1, 18. This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about. His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph.

[9 : 43] But before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Because Joseph, her husband, was faithful to the law and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet. The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son. They will call him Emmanuel, which means God with us. When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, but he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. He gave him the name Jesus. So we've been thinking about signs.

[10:51] There's going to be things coming up behind me, so hopefully to remind you of what we're doing. So that's sign. And that's God gave at Christmas.

A sign he promised to send. A virgin will conceive and give birth to a son. He should be called Emmanuel. And as we read there in Matthew, we're told that's exactly why Jesus was born. He was God's sign to us. That's the sign. But what is the sign? A sign is something that shows us something. It may inform us.

It tells us something. It may warn us. It's something that we're to respond to and react to. A sign is there to tell us something. It may be an information sign pointing up to the abbey this way. It may be a sign warning us of the harbour. To be careful where you drive may be a sign which tells us it's one way. You mustn't go that way or no entry. But what does the sign of Jesus mean?

[11:48] What does the sign of the Son of God coming into this world mean for us? It means, first of all, that God is. That God is.

You cannot have a sign that grows itself, if I put it that way. You have to have a sign maker and you have to have a sign putter-upper, if I put it that way. We know that.

We know that a sign only appears because it's been placed there by somebody. And so Christmas, the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, is a sign from God, first of all, that God exists, that he's real, that he's not just some figment of imagination.

God sent his Son into the world to say, here I am. I really do exist. I really am part of this world. I really am here for you to know and to enter into relationship with.

The birth of Jesus Christ is the birth of God into the world. And it shows us that God is an amazing God, a God who is beyond our capabilities because the virgin shall be with child.

[12:52] The unmarried, the one who has not consummated their relationship, I'll just talk over the children's head for a moment, the one who has not entered into that relationship physically, is with child.

That's impossible, we say. That can't be done. We know there has to be male and female to bring together a child in the womb of a woman. God does the impossible.

God does that which cannot be done by us. God is amazing. God is great. So the first sign, the reality of Jesus coming to the world is saying to us, I'm here.

I'm God. I'm knowable. I'm entering into your world. And I'm a God who does amazing and great things. Secondly, the sign of Christmas is that God is love.

Why do we give gifts to one another? We give them for all sorts of reasons that we thought yesterday. Actually, that's a question I was meant to ask everybody. Who got toiletries for Christmas? Remember what I said yesterday morning?

[13:53] They're telling you something. I got loads. They're telling you something. But you give a gift because you want to express love. You give a gift because you want to show that you care, that that person is someone that matters to you, that means something to you.

And God has given his son because of his love for us. There's a wonderful verse in the Bible that describes that so well. For God so loved the world, he gave his one and only son.

God has given us the greatest gift he could possibly give. He's given us a world which is wonderful. He's given us life which is tremendous. But he's given the greatest thing, the most precious possession he had, his own dear son.

He gave that which was closest to his heart. Whatever we think about God, the reality is that God loves this world. Whether we feel isolated from God, or cut off from God, or abandoned by God, Christmas tells us that we are loved by God.

There's the physical evidence. There's the real proof of love. The giving of himself in Jesus Christ. But why did he give Jesus?

[15 : 03] What does the sign of Jesus mean for us? The sign of Jesus coming is a warning sign telling us we need help. When somebody comes, perhaps to our door, often they're bringing something.

They're bringing something we do not have. Maybe the postman bringing a letter or a parcel. Maybe a tradesman bringing something to repair our plumbing, or to repair our cooker, or to repair the roof. When it's somebody at Christmas who comes, they're bringing a gift.

They're bringing something for us. And in the coming of Jesus, we have him coming to us in need. We are in great need of help.

Why are we in great need of help? Well, because the very reason Jesus came was to save us from our sins. That's what his name means. It means the Lord saves. He came to save his people from their sins.

Sin is that problem of the heart. We thought about yesterday morning. It's that problem whereby in our hearts, we turn away from God. We live our own plans, our own ways.

[16 : 06] We think that we know better than God. We are the gods of our lives. And that sin is something which places us in severe danger, great danger. It warns us that unless that is dealt with and sorted out, we will be forever, eternally cut off from God.

One of the great sadnesses for most people is that they think that without God, life is fun. The reality is that without God, life is not life. It's not what we were made for.

We were made to enjoy God and to rejoice in God and delight in him. And all the other things we try and fill our lives with are just rubbish that leave us damaged and painful and lonely and scared.

But here is God's love for us that he sent his son to rescue us, to save us from immortal danger.

The sign of Christmas is also the cross.

not just the cross roads, but particularly the cross because Jesus came into this world. He was born as that baby. He was born as that truly human and truly God so that he might experience and do for us what we could not do for ourselves, that he might die in our place upon that cross.

[17 : 24] And by his death, we have through his blood the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus has purchased and paid for us forgiveness with God.

That sin which separates, that sin which is obnoxious, that sin which is pain, which is destroying, that sin which pushes God away from us is the sin that Jesus took upon himself when he died on the cross, when he died a death that we deserve for us.

That's real love to take our place, to be our substitute so that by his blood, by his death, we have forgiveness. The slate is wiped clean.

The past and the guilt and the shame and the humiliation, all of it is taken away and we are able to be forgiven and right with God, received, loved, and experienced that love for ourselves.

And the last thing here, the last sign of Christmas for us is this. We must do something about it. A sign is only any good to us if we pay attention to it.

[18 : 29] A sign is only any good if we take notice of it, if we respond to it. And the sign of Christmas is God coming to us, inviting and commanding and calling us to come to him.

Here's the words of Jesus. Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. I will bring to you and give to you that which you long for more than anything else, peace of heart, a right relationship with God, deliverance from fear, assurance of love.

What are we going to do with the sign of Christmas that Jesus has come? There's the two options, danger or safety. We can continue our own way, doing what we think is best, ignoring the sign, ignoring God, ignoring Jesus, and we are heading towards immortal danger, eternal death, and separation from God.

Or we can come to Jesus, to that place of safety, who saves us from our sins. We can come to him with faith, receiving the gift that is the gift of Christmas, turning from our sin and trusting that Jesus took our sin at the cross.

Jesus invites you and me this Christmas to come to him. Are we going to do that? We're going to come to one another's homes, we're going to come and round a meal, we're going to share in all sorts of things. Have you come to Jesus?

[19 : 53] The sign is there, it's clear as day, you can't ignore it, but you can reject it, or you can act upon it. Which will we do this Christmas?

I pray and trust that this Christmas, for many of us, will be the opportunity for us to come to Jesus, to find out more about him, to experience that fullness of life.

Over Christmas, we've been giving away this little book, The Greatest Gift. If you haven't had one yet, please take one, there's some just at the back there and there's some downstairs, please take one, it's a little book, ten minutes, it talks about what I've been saying, the greatest gift of God in Christ.

Well, we're coming to the end now of our service this morning, so let's sing our final hymn, it's number 209, O come all ye faithful, joyful, and triumphant.

new Manuel 1st pa crayons. That's a very niceode because I will promise to Him he faithful and Esp█ streak is so, let Diellä and █ung and Espwear and Emily and his favourite what happens? [21 : 04] This morning we'll change the purpose, at the time we'll come all to the end of it. We'll be there. I'm ready to bring you O God, O ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O God, ye are coming to heaven.

O God, O ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O God, ye are coming to heaven.

O God, O God, O God, light of light, O the apostles of the Lord.

O high, O God, spirit, all the aince to 1921 Amen.

O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

[22 : 42] Sing, hearts of angels, sing in exultation, sing, holy citizens of heaven.

Glory to God in the highest, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

May God be greeted, O this happy morning, Jesus to be in the glory.

May God be greeted, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank You for this day, for all that's ahead of us, the food, the enjoyment, the family, the gifts, the TV.

[24 : 22] We pray, Lord, that in the day we may still remember You and rejoice and give thanks to You. May You be the centre of our Christmas and the centre of our lives. And bless us, O Lord, in these days as we rest and are refreshed.

We give You thanks again for Jesus our Saviour. And we pray once more, O Lord, that we might know Him and follow Him and love Him and delight in Him, not just on Christmas Day, but all the days of our lives.

For we ask these things to the glory of God. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.