



FROM THE CHAPLAIN

Do you know it is Christmas in only 2 months away; crazy, hey?

If you didn't realise, take this as the starting pistol going off. In all the busyness you can easily forget the important things; a bit like thoughtfully buying all the family Christmas presents and getting home only to realise your child is still at the shops. It is rather easy to leave Jesus behind, enjoying the goodies of the season but forgetting the 'reason for the season.' Over this term, I want to look at one aspect in each edition of The Way; today we start with: Jesus was promised long, long ago. In Luke 1, we read:

"Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you." 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his (the angel's) words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favour with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." 34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

Here, we see that God makes what seems an outrageous promise to Mary. She was a teenage girl for whom having a baby was not a possibility at that stage. Yet, God bestowed on her the great privilege of giving birth to Jesus. Quite understandably, she was 'greatly troubled', perhaps an understatement! But the angel encouraged her with the reminder that she wasn't being punished but she had been blessed. Hers was a unique and unrepeatable historical event. God was at work in and through ordinary people to fulfill His purposes and promises. In life, we are often asked to hang on tight and trust God's goodness.

While Mary was highly favoured by God, her son is the real star. Jesus, Son of God. Mary would give birth to God in the flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, without physical union. While we may love the cutesy story of Jesus' birth, the reality is that God's promised King was to arrive. The centuries of longing for God to make good on this promise would finally be fulfilled. And unlike any earthly kingdom, such as his forefather King David (David and Goliath fame), this reign would last forever.

At this point, we might pause and consider: what is so good about the promise of Mary's baby boy? While we think about the gifts we give and receive at Christmas, what is the gift that God brings us in Jesus?

Next time: The Birth of Jesus – Luke 2:1-20

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