

Christmas Day Whole Service

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Date: 25 December 2019

Preacher: William Philip

[0 : 00] up glorify the days praise what the all-highest this day has done set aside fear banish lamentation strike up a song full of joy and mirth serve the all-highest with glorious choirs let us worship the name of the lord well we need to do as he says and begin by singing the first carol on our screens christians awake salute the happy morn on which the savior of the world was born music o ms o

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[3 : 20] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

As we said, let's join our hearts together in prayer. Let's pray. Almighty God, who has given us thine only begotten Son, to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin, grant that we, being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, we may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit.

Through the same, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with thee, and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

[5 : 40] Amen. Well, it's lovely to see you here this morning, and lots of excitable little ones as well. Agnes is in the Lord, Agnes is in the Lord.

Amen. Amen.

But you are dust, and you are dust, and you are dust.

And of their fat portions.

Why are you angry, and why are you angry, and why is your face fallen?

[8 : 19] Am I my brother's keeper? The Lord said, what have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed, and now you are cursed, and you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.

When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive, and you shall be a fugitive, and you shall be a fugitive, and a wanderer on the earth.

We'll come back to the rest of the earth. We'll come back to the rest of the earth. That story right at the beginning of the earth. That story right at the beginning of the Bible reminds us how great was the need of a deliverer from man's disaster from the earliest times.

And all through the history of God's people, that promise shone, and people of faith longed for the one that God had promised, Emmanuel. God himself with us to save.

So we're going to sing now a hymn that reflects that. O come, Emmanuel. O come, Emmanuel. O come, Emmanuel.

[10 : 15] O come, Emmanuel. O come, Emmanuel.

G bek, Emmanuel. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Long ago, says the Apostle, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, and through whom he also created the world.

[13 : 54] He is the exact imprint of his nature. And he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

We've been thinking about these opening verses of Hebrews which tell us that Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to many things, but to the intractable curse of the human condition.

Jesus Christ is God's word of ultimate divine restoration. And we've been looking at these amazing words which open the book of Hebrews, thinking about the inconsolable longing that human beings all feel as human beings, because God has set eternity in our hearts.

It's part of the way we're made. And also the inescapable questioning that grabs the minds of men and women, because we have tried as human beings to reject the truth about God.

And the symptoms of that great paradox, our yearning for God, and yet our rejection of God explains our world. We are made for God, and yet we've rejected him.

[15 : 20] We exist for fellowship with God, our maker. And yet, by and large, we put ourselves outside the realm where he can be intimately known and enjoyed and rejoiced in.

And that's what accounts for so much of the loneliness, the confusion about identity that we see all around us in our world. The current epidemic of confusion around gender identity is just the latest manifestation of that.

How terribly sad it is. But you see, the message of Christmas, friends, is that the answer from God has come to all of this, because Jesus Christ is the answer to the deepest yearning of our hearts.

He's God's ultimate revelation to us. And to the deepest questioning of our minds. He is God's word of ultimate reason that answers those questions. He's the answer to all the great questions of life.

Of who we are, where we've come from, where we're going, why the world is as it is, what the whole world is about, what it's here for. But there's another really important question.

[16 : 29] And that's the question, how? How can that better world that we yearn for deep down, that we instinctively know should be there somewhere, how can it really ever be?

How can this world that we know be transformed into that world that we long for? Well, to answer that question, first of all, we need to recognize the root of why this world is not presently as it should be, or as we would like it to be.

And that's what the second half of verse 3 here in Hebrews chapter 1 tells us. Look, after making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

And this little verse just tells us three very clear things about what Christmas is really all about. I want to share them with you this morning as we continue to sing our carols.

And I hope that these things, if you understand them, will fill your whole day with real joy, and this whole season with joy. But here's the first thing we need to get to grips with, and that is a real curse.

[17 : 40] This world is far from being the world that we want it to be, and we long deeply for, because of the ultimate problem of human sin. And that's implicit in these words, isn't it?

That Jesus came to make purification for sins. Because that is the root problem of this world. Paul puts it very succinctly in Romans chapter 5.

He says, sin came into this world through one man, and death through sin. So death spread to all men, because all sinned. And death, he says, reigned in this world.

And that's the curse that we've read about. Mankind is separated from God by his sin, and left in a world of his own rule.

And we just need to look around to see what happens to our world when human beings are left in the driving seat. Look at how this section that we read in Genesis 3 ends.

[18 : 41] God promises a curse on the whole world after man's rebellion. And God casts human beings out of the perfect place, the garden of his dwelling.

And you remember, he placed angels with flaming swords barring the way back. So there was no way back to God from that dark path of sin that man had chosen. No human way, anyway.

And that, friends, is the real curse that explains our world. When people say to God, we don't want you to be our ruler anymore, go away. God says, well, so be it.

You insist on being your own ruler then. And what we read together in Genesis chapter 4 shows us, in a very personal way, the effect of that in individual lives.

Cain is an individual example for us of what happens when we reject God. God started showing hostility to his brother. And then he killed him through his jealousy.

[19 : 46] And he personally, therefore, separated himself from God because of his sin. He brought the curse doubly down on his own head, is what God said to him. But did that give him the liberty?

Did that give him the freedom that he was chasing? Well, it didn't, did it? Look at verse 13 there. What did he say? My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Why? Well, he lost his whole sense of identity. Look at verse 14. You've driven me away from the ground and from your face. Your face will be hidden from me, he says to God.

He's lost all sense of who he's created for and what he's created for, working the ground for God. And he's lost his whole sense of society too, hasn't he?

I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth. His relationships are going to disappoint. They're going to be restless. He won't find peace and he knows it. And as a result, he's lost all his sense of security.

[20 : 48] End of verse 14. Whoever finds me is going to kill me. And so his life's going to be governed by fear of the future, fear of people, that they'll try to hurt him.

And he'll be unable, won't he, to really trust anybody. Won't be able to commit to people, to relationships, either personally or in business life or anything else.

There's a world full of canes out there today, aren't there? With very little sense of identity, of society, of security. I think that describes our world this Christmas.

It's a fearful place. There's a huge amount of fear all around us. A huge amount of trust disappearing and dissipating. That's the root of so much of the strife that we see nationally and internationally.

People can't trust one another to trade with one another, to keep the currency working properly, to not be snooping with the 5G networks and all of these things.

[21 : 48] And on and on it goes. There's a great lack of trust. But all of these symptoms, you see, are just something that are symptoms of a far deeper thing.

And it's that C word, the curse. The real curse because of human sin. It's like the other dreaded C word, cancer, isn't it? Because often the symptoms at first seem quite unrelated to the primary pathology.

Sometimes it's just something as odd as signs in somebody's fingers or spots on their eyes or something as insignificant seeming as that. But they're harbingers of something deep and dark, right at the heart of the body's life.

And that's the root cause, friends, of all of our problems in this world. It's the fact of human sin. It's the guilt of human sin in every one of our lives.

That's why this world is as it is and not as we would love it to be. And the telltale symptoms appear all over the place in our own lives, throughout the whole of society, and the restlessness, and the anxiety in our spirits, and the unsettledness, and the longings deep down that we all feel, and the frustration, and the despair sometimes that we witness in others.

[23 : 06] That's the root cause. It's the cancer. It's the intractable curse right at the heart of a human story. But you see, the message of Christmas is the answer, and the only answer has come in Jesus Christ.

He alone answers the deepest problems of our human lives, because He came to make purification for sin.

And He came to deal, therefore, with that intractable curse forever. That's why the Christmas message is joy. Joy to the world. Because Jesus came to make His blessings flow once again, far as that curse had been found.

He came to make an end to sin. We'll think more about that in a minute. But first of all, let's sing that lovely hymn, Joy to the World, Because the Lord Has Come.

Joy to the World, Because the Lord has come. We're the first ■ as a human race. We'll think, come on to sing that lovely hymn, O church.

[24 : 14] We'll be with you and pray. We're so weary, though, for we know it will lead you BY. To do the world's st ■■■ when the ■■■■ has come. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[26 : 51] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[28 : 45] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

That was the last one. say in Romans that God has done what the law weakened by the flesh could not do. By sending his son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who believe in Jesus. That is, Jesus took our place and took our punishment because he became sin. He took the blame. He bore the wrath, as the hymn says, so that we can stand forgiven at the cross. He dealt with the root cause of all the problems of our human lives, which is the guilt of sin. And there is at last real cleansing.

And as a result, there is now a way back to God from that dark path of sin because the stain, the stench is gone. It's been purified. And that means the doors of God's home, his own household have been opened to people like us.

Long time ago now, a group from the church here, I think it was Paul Worth, if I remember who organized it. We went paintballing. It was a very great mistake. I nearly broke a leg. And it was in this ghastly field full of mud. And I came home absolutely covered from head to toe in stinking mud. I came to the front door. It was slammed immediately in my face.

I was sent around to the back door of the house, told to strip off all my clothes. I stood naked in the garden while my wife hosed me down with a hose before I was even allowed into the house to go and have a proper shower. How much more radical is the real cleansing that's needed to satisfy the Holy God who cannot sully his home with the stink, with the stench, with the stain of our human sin.

[31 : 08] But Jesus brings real cleansing. That's what Christmas means. There's one more thing, but first another carol about this child in the manger who inherits all our demerits, all our transgressions, so that we might have that real cleansing.

And we've been on a terrible ■■■■ online day in the manger in the Amber page 1 dash full of mud. We're not having a portrait. And we're only perfect for God to last the He has real■■■■■ man and gift. And we're now thankful for God to win his garden. We're going to offer you great, for God to come secure as He has a great you OUT. We're not having a battle of this child ■ifter to leave, without you, or in the drives of your hands. We're not having a battle of this child are you today? We're not having a battle of this child on our basic kind of he life. But we grow as scriptures of faith in the window. You know that we hear from God, he's doing this to color on our card. He's getting a battle of this child. And we're in His trance of Shining. A victory on our brand name and fruit of our daily Northern Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

The state of our world, the needs of all of our lives can only be explained by that sad truth, that terrible truth. But there is real cleansing. He made purification for sins.

[33 : 45] And therefore, you see, friends, the joyous message of Christmas is that there is real certainty, real certainty about the future of this world, about the future of our own lives, our personal worlds, if we know and love Jesus Christ.

Because in Jesus, God has not only spoken his final word to man, but in Jesus, he has completed his final work for man.

That's what the whole of the book of Hebrews is telling us. In Jesus, we have God's final word and he has done the final work forever. A finished work.

It is finished. That was Jesus' cry on the cross. Because his great redeeming, cleansing work at last was done. And that's also what's signified in the words here in verse 3.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. He sat down because his work is accomplished forever.

[34 : 49] There's nothing else needed at all for man's restoration to God. His cleansing has been accomplished. And the door is open now to God's dwelling place on high.

A little later on in Hebrews chapter 10, he says this. For by a single offering, Jesus perfected for all time, for all time, those who are being sanctified, who are being purified, who are being made holy.

For all time. That's certainty, isn't it? There's no fear ever that something more might need to be done. That something perhaps has been forgotten. Something left to secure our future.

To ensure that we'll be okay. That nothing will go wrong between us and God again. Something else that we might just need for that day when we stand before the judgment sheet of Christ.

No. Our future is certain. Because Jesus has done it all already. Having made purification for sins, he sat down.

[35 : 57] The right hand of the majesty. The place of honor and glory. At the apex of heaven. Certain. For all time. Every year at Christmas.

Well, at least every year until now. I'll discover later on today if it's still true. But our family has bought us annual membership of the National Trust. And we're very thankful for it.

It means we can go to Killeen Castle and all of these nice places without paying huge fees. But it needs to be renewed every year. If we don't get it this year. Well, we won't be quite as certain, will we?

Of our entry. But actually my in-laws many years ago made a very wise decision. They bought life membership of the National Trust. When it was available really quite cheaply. I think you can still get it.

But it costs thousands and thousands of pounds. They never have to renew it every year. For the whole of the rest of their lives. There is complete certainty of entry to any National Trust property anywhere in the country.

[36 : 59] It's been done forever. Once and for all. And friends, that's the message of Christmas. Jesus has come and he's done it all forever.

It's one of the favorite words in the book of Hebrews, isn't it? We've been seeing forever. Seven times we're told Jesus is a high priest forever. Because of his once and for all act of cleansing and purification.

He has secured the right forever to entry into the royal palace of God's holiness. The right to be with him freely for everyone who is in his family.

Family membership secured forever and ever. That puts lifetime family membership in a very different light altogether, doesn't it? That's why Hebrews 6 verse 19 says this.

We have this. That is the good news of the gospel. We have it as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul. A hope that enters the inner place behind the curtain.

[38 : 02] The imagery there is the curtain of the temple. Screening off the place where God himself dwells. And we have that as an anchor there. Certain hope.

Because he has gone there as a forerunner on our behalf. Having become our high priest forever. That's why he goes on in Hebrews chapter 7 to say, He, Jesus, is able therefore to save to the uttermost.

All those who draw near to God through him because he always lives to make intercession for them. There is real certainty. There is real and abundant hope for the future.

Because in Jesus Christ, God has spoken his ultimate word to man. And he's accomplished his ultimate work for man. Jesus is the ultimate answer of God.

His word of ultimate restoration. He and only he can answer but has answered the intractable curse of our human condition.

[39 : 09] He brings real certainty for the future because he brings real cleansing from all of our past. That's why he drives away forever, every specter of that real curse that has overshadowed this world right from the very beginning.

He brings restoration. And that is the great message of Christmas. The real answer, the only answer to the solitude, to the estrangement of our guilt.

Is in the cleansing of Jesus that brings forgiveness. That brings real fellowship with God. Forever. Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course, Christmas is just the beginning. The best is yet to be. It won't be until Jesus returns in glory to consummate forever. All that he's already made certain.

But it's real nonetheless. Just as we'll soon see in our gardens, the snowdrops. Breaking through the ground. Even though it's still the depth of winter.

[40 : 12] That remind us that spring is just around the corner. And that summer, although it seems so hard to believe that this time of year, summer will come again. So Christmas in just that way is the harbinger of a future.

Real summer of glory. That is real. That is certain. And that shall surely come. Just as night follows day. There is real certainty, my friends.

In the message of Christmas. I hope that's something that you'll rejoice in all through this Christmas day. That you're rejoicing in already. If it's not, because this is all new to you.

Then this is a gift that can be yours. This very day. This Christmas. There is no greater gift that you could possibly ever have. And God our Savior wants you to have that gift.

Here and now. To know him. To rejoice in him. And it's yours. The very moment. You turn to him. And you call on him.

[41 : 14] To be your Savior. Make sure, won't you, that. Jesus Christ. Will be. The answer to the deepest needs of your life.

This Christmas. Let's pray. Heavenly Father. For sending your only begotten son. Through whom you made the whole world.

And for whom this whole world exists. To be our Savior. To make purification for sins. How we thank you. And we ask, Lord.

That the certainty of that great cleansing. Would belong to everyone here this morning. And cause us. Not only this day.

But every day. To break forth into great, great. Great joy. In Jesus. Our Savior forever. Amen.

[42 : 14] Well, we're going to sing as we close. The great carol. Hark. The herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn king. Choon, I ■■■ot churches are good.

Amen. Good morning. Amen. More than a bay. Amen.

Those Lazarus singe. Come again. Amen. worry. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[44 : 10] Thank you.

Thank you.

Let's pray. God has spoken to us by his Son. And after making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

And so we praise you, O Lord our God, and we thank you for Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Amen.

A very happy Christmas to all of you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
Thank you. Thank you.

[45 : 47] Thank you. Thank you. Again, you ask in many of you, our Lord.gram, we love screen, but
we thank you. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.