

CCH Carols Sunday 19th December 2021 “A Complicated Christmas”

Talk Part 1- “A complicated world”- Genesis 3:8-19

- **v17.** “Cursed is the ground because of you”.
- If you were to pick one word to sum up last few months: *complicated*.
 - staff shortages, travel restrictions, PCR tests, covid isolations, test and trace, delivery problems, party cancellations.
 - It’s been a complicated time.
 - Just in this last week I’ve heard of people taking time off work to and driving 60miles round trip to get a booster jab only to find when they got there they couldn’t get in.
 - Or friends who have been waiting 92 weeks for an operation for their son, and it keeps getting cancelled.
- “Why d’you have to go and make life so complicated?” sang A Lavigne.
- We’ll all have our own covid stories from the last few weeks & months,
 - and for many they will be **frustrating**,
 - for some they will be **exasperating**,
 - and tragically for others they will be **devastating**.
- The last 2 years have been complicated, and it doesn’t look to get any simpler in the next few weeks. While we hope Christmas won’t be cancelled Oliver Cromwell style, people are being encouraged to be careful, to restrict contact where needed and there’s uncertainty hanging over what will be permitted in the new year.
 - It’s a complicated Christmas.
- In fact our first reading tells us that it’s always been this way:
 - we live in a complicated world.
- At CCH recently completed series Genesis 1-4,
 - discovered that these ch make so much sense of life.
 - podcasts of the sermons are on website if you want to listen
 - Gen introduces us to God the creator in all his glory
 - one who made us and loves us and given so much.
 - But explains that we’ve turned our back on God
 - and esp ch 3 which tells us what has gone wrong.
- choosing to reject his rule and steal his throne
- And this reading tells us what’s gone wrong.
 - 3 fundamental relationships ruined by our rebellion
 - Upward: Mankind & God.
 - Acrossward: Man & Woman
 - even downward: Mankind & Creation.
- so helpful explains we are now living in a complicated world.
 - Childbirth is complicated.
 - Work is complicated.
 - Relationships are complicated.
 - In fact they are all corrupted.
 - And they are complicated because we are corrupted.
- Gen 3 explains this complicated world
 - for many **frustrating**.
 - thorns and thistles
 - infinitely more difficult to do simple tasks. Workplace.
 - for some **exasperating**
 - chapter speaks of blame, shame,
 - How’s your love life right now? “It’s complicated”.
 - and for some **devastating**.
 - death comes into the world like a cold shadow
 - even this wk members of church funeral loved ones.
- It’s a complicated world.
- But here’s the wonder of the Christmas message.
 - It was into complicated world that God chose to send his Son.
 - It was to reverse the curse that God promised in this very chapter to send an offspring of Eve who would crush Satan v15.
 - It was to this complicated world that the angels first sang.
- So listen in as the choir sings “*Oh hush the noise ye men of strife and hear the angels sing*”.

- **Part 2- “A complicated arrival”- Matt 1:18-23**

- **v18.** If you think Covid makes life a bit more complicated
 - think about having a virgin birth.
 - blokes think how Joseph feels when Mary tells him she’s pregnant?
 - resolves to break off the engagement, but must be gutted.
 - but in the night God reassures him
 - Now Joseph’s got a new complication- explaining to the friends and family that Mary’s baby bump is from God.
 - “Yeah right” they say down at the carpenter’s arms.
- That wasn’t the end of the complexities for Mary and Joseph.
 - can you imagine when they hear the breaking news that there’s going to be a census, scheduled.... right on their due date.
 - And can you imagine the look on Mary’s face heavily pregnant Joseph tells her they need to travel 90miles through the hills.
 - Google maps tells me that’s 31 hours of travelling time on foot (which I guess is the same speed roughly as a donkey).
- But it’s not over.
 - When they get there, possibly as contractions start
 - there’s no room in any guest house
 - in fact no hospital/ anaesthetics/ midwives/ hospital bed.
 - we’re so used to Christmas cards with the manger, but can you imagine laying your firstborn in a cow’s feeding trough?
- It’s a taste that Jesus was born into this complicated world.
- We’ve just sung “*Lo he abhors not the virgin’s womb*”. Jesus didn’t resist coming into this physical world through a with all the vulnerability of a new born baby.
- But once he was born it wasn’t over. Next there was a sudden rush to leave Bethlehem before Herod’s bloodthirsty soldiers came to massacre the infants.
- And then there was the flight to Egypt.
- It may be that some today have had their travel plans cancelled or changed this Christmas. Well it was the same that first Christmas. But do you see all of this was God’s plan.
- As ___ just read the virgin birth and all that followed was to “fulfil what the Lord had said thru Prophet”. Repeated again & again by Mat
- God loves to make things more complicated to show that HE is in control.
- And for the sceptics amongst us, these prophecies hundreds of years earlier that speak with pinpoint accuracy of the nature, location and meaning of Jesus’ birth.
- Let me give you just one. It was promised around 700BC through the prophet Micah that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. But his mother was living in Nazareth at that time. So God organised a census across the whole Roman empire to get Jesus born in the right place. What was an annoying frustration and complexity (31 hours of travel on a donkey) was actually God’s promised plan.
- If Christmas feels complicated to you this year.
 - perhaps because you won’t now see loved ones
 - or perhaps because your plans have to change
 - perhaps you have your own family or even baby complexities of your own.
- Do you see that God entered into this complicated world
 - *We’ve sung it already....*
He was little weak and helpless
tears and smiles like us he knew
and he feeleth for our sadness
and he shareth in our gladness.
- He understands
 - he sympathises.
- Never think that God is a God who stands far off.
- He came down into this world
- But he doesn’t just come to sympathise
- As we’ll see in our next reading he comes to save.
- But first O little town of Bethlehem
- Please stand to sing.

Part 3- "An uncomplicated reason"- Luke 2:8-20

- v11
- It's a complicated world.
- And the Son of God embraced that world and came into this world in a complicated arrival, which itself was fraught with complexity.
- But why did he come?
- We've already seen a hint that complexity is often part of God's plan. The virgin birth, the Bethlehem birth, the Messiah birth were all predicted by the prophets hundreds of years earlier. God promises something complicated, and then makes it happen, proving that He is God, and he is working out his purposes.
- But the real reason why Jesus came into this world is very simple.
- Why do you get involved in other people's messy and complicated lives? The answer is LOVE!
- This is the uncomplicated reason why Jesus came by complicated arrival into a complicated world. Love.
- There's a lovely detail that is there in the message from the Angels to the Shepherds that can be easily missed.
- "Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born TO YOU"
- To you!
- Jesus didn't just come for the rich and powerful wise men
- he came for the poor and socially marginalised shepherds.
 - And he didn't just come to sympathise.
 - He came to save.
 - "Today in the town of David a SAVIOUR has been born"
- And the message is for us today.
 - The long-promised Son of God came into this complicated world, this world riddled with cancer, covid and climate change because he came to save it.
 - Rather than coming to condemn us as we deserve, Jesus came into this world to save it as its saviour. He loves us. He loves you.
- No wonder the Angels burst into praise "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests".
- God is bringing favour to the earth.
- God is rescuing this broken planet.
- Jesus' life only got more complicated.
 - Opposition, arrest, crucifixion.
 - But again it was all part of God's plan.
 - More complications for an uncomplicated reason. LOVE.
- Jesus came to die. He came to pay the penalty for our sin.
- Covid, cancer, Climate change have come because of human wickedness, yours and mine.
- Have you discovered that when life gets complicated you are more irritable. Tempers fray and fuses get shorter. Blame and then Shame come just like they did in the garden of Eden.
- Well we are guilty, but
- But God loved the world so much that he gave his only son so that whoever would believe in him would never die but have eternal life.
- Christianity is not about giving to charity or even coming to church (though some of those things may follow), but rather putting your life in the hands of the only one who can save us.
- *"Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give them second birth"*
- And so the question to each one of us this Christmas is how will we respond?
- God has sent his son into this complicated world through his own complicated arrival because of his uncomplicated love.
- Will we receive that love?
- The band are going to sing a lovely piece
- You can get the impression from the Christmas cards that Jesus came into a clean sanitised world, but he came into this messy world.
- The question is whether you will have him come into your messy life.
- Let's think about that as the band sing us a new song.
- "Oh Come all you unfaithful"