

2025 TALK, JOHN 1:1-14

CHRISTMAS: ALL CREATION SINGS – OF BREATHING LIFE

Here's a Christmas quiz question. A question for about new-borns & parenthood. How long does a child take, after it is born, to recognise its mother or father?... You have probably heard stories about baby behaviour, or even seen this in action. Some newborns are able to recognise the voices of their parents virtually from the day they are born. From the time an unborn baby in the womb develops the ability to hear, that baby gets to hear two unique sounds: the voice of its mum singing to it; the voice of its father speaking to the ever-growing bump. Unintelligible words get heard by those tiny little ears, from the very first moments the brain begins to develop the earliest forms of consciousness. Words spoken by the closest, most familiar voices mean that the baby begins its journey of making sense of the world. This is the most basic form of education & orientation, even before any baby is born. A voice. A word.

But what happens if a baby is deaf? That child is at an instant disadvantage from those early days. It usually takes deaf children longer to recognise their parents. A lot longer to make sense of the world... The truth is, we are all slow to recognise the voice of our Heavenly Father. In fact, as Jesus said: we are all slow to listen, slow to believe. The prophet Isaiah, quoted by Jesus, declares that we are: 'ever hearing but never listening ; ever looking but never seeing'.

Failing to recognise our Heavenly Father's voice means we do not develop a close bond with God. But, as this 1st chapter of John declares: we all, from the very beginning, have an undeniable bond with God. God's Word who gave the light of life to all, is bonded with us. And in sending Jesus, God has reminded us of heaven's covenant bond. God's eternal commitment to all creation. This 'life-line' can be traced in the stars & traced on the life-lines of our hands.

The good news of Christmas is that God's living Word became flesh & made his dwelling among us. This is the One & Only Son, full of grace & truth. Everything he does is love & all he says is true. God who was from before all time, comes to us in the fullness of time, to bring all things to fullness & completion. Thanks to Jesus, Word of life, we can recognise our true parentage.

The gospel of John is the story of Christmas stripped back to its most basic elements – to the primeval nature of all life, our cosmic origins. OK, so this version doesn't have the human interest of the Mary & Joseph, the shepherds

& the wise men & all those animals brought near to hear the word of life taking its first breaths, making its first noises... In Luke's version we can at least imagine ourselves as the shepherds or Mary or Joseph. In John's gospel, the only human figures we see are John the Baptist, a witness to the light. Then there is Jesus, fully human & fully God. **But** the great thing about John's version, is that we see Christmas from Jesus' perspective. How amazing is that!

Here's the heart of the good news of Christmas: The One & Only full of grace & truth came to that which was his own. The 'word become flesh' came to the world he had created, but his own world did not receive him. There was no room at the inn for the Christ-child, the hope of all the world. But here's the wonder of Christmas in a 3 letter word in verse 12: 'Yet'... Even though the world did not welcome Jesus, God continues to welcome the world. We did not roll out the red carpet for the King of Kings. No hospitality. No welcome. But the King of love still rolls out the red carpet for us... Good news this Christmas!

This is holy ground. & whenever God's people are on holy ground they are invited to take off their shoes. As we journey to Bethlehem & look forward to celebrating Jesus' birth; as we prepare to gather round this table to remember Jesus' life & death & resurrection – in all this we are treading on holy ground. As we approach God, like those filthy shepherds, we can scarcely begin to believe. We are deeply aware of our own nakedness & our need for forgiveness. We are treading on God's red carpet laid out for us. A red carpet which still runs with the blood of Jesus, who gave himself for us & all the world. Imagine for a moment, treading barefoot on a carpet flowing with the blood of Jesus. What does that feel like? What does this mean for us today?

Michelle (& Rachel) you know what this means for you. You have welcomed & received this word of life. You have believed in Jesus. You have found forgiveness & new life in Christ. By God's Spirit, you now know what it is to be children of God. You have returned home, to the word of life which created you. Today, my sister(s) in Christ, I simply want to finish by saying this to you: every day celebrate being a child of God. I encourage you, each & every day: keep in step with God's Spirit; walk with Jesus & dwell in the love of your Heavenly Father. Call God 'Abba', Daddy. Relate to God as any child should relate to their parents... We know the song which goes: 'I wish it could be Christmas every day'. Well, thanks to Jesus, every day **is** Christmas Day!! Every day we **are** welcomed by God to the family home.

Let's celebrate – thanks to Jesus we find our home, together with God's family
round the LORD's table...