

The Day has arrived. It's here!

Some of you today have carried on with traditions and routines you've had in place for many years. Others are creating new traditions because of what has happened over the past few months. Today can be a day of celebration for us all.

I've got something to show you. It's amazing. The combination of things in the box is extraordinary! "X, come and have a look! Come and inspect what is here!"

2,022 years ago, give or take two or three months, a Baby was born. We know quite a lot about Jesus' birth and life from the Bible.

Some angels appeared to a group of people that weren't at all valued in the town where they lived. These men, who were shepherds, were surprised. They were probably amazed by the sight of the angels singing (as we all would be), but I think it was the message of the angels that *really* got them excited.

"Do not be afraid! Listen, I bring you glorious news of great joy which is for all the people. This very day, in David's town, a Saviour has been born for you. He is Christ, the Lord. Let this prove it to you: you will find a baby, wrapped up and lying in a manger." Luke 2:10-12 [Phillips New Testament]

For many hundreds of years, the Jews had been waiting for their Messiah to come. For the past 6 decades the Jews had been subject to the rule of the Romans and so now they wanted a political Messiah as well as a religious one. The shepherds would have been overjoyed by the message from the angels and so went straight away to find the Baby.

Luke 2:15,16

As soon as the heavenly messengers disappeared into heaven, the shepherds were buzzing with conversation. **Shepherds:** Let's rush down to Bethlehem right now! Let's see what's happening! Let's experience what the Lord has told us about! So they ran into town, and *eventually* they found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the feeding trough. [Voice]

Speudó is the Greek word we often translate as hurrying. It has the feeling of desiring something earnestly and to urge others on too. The shepherds were told about Jesus and then really desired to know what was going on. They ran. They were earnest in their searching. They encouraged each other and then they told other people about Jesus too.

In the Bible that wasn't the only time someone had been given an invitation to meet Jesus and subsequently something beautiful happened.

In John 1, Jesus is calling His disciples. Phillip has encountered Jesus and tells his friend Nathanael about Him. After a brief chat Philip tells Nathanael to "Just come and see for yourself," [Living Bible]. Erchomai – accompany me, come with me. Let's find out together. It was a joint thing – not Philip telling Nathanael to go and find out and then report back in a few hours. They were going together to find out more about this Jesus chap.

Three decades later Jesus had been crucified in Jerusalem. Some women were looking for His dead body. They couldn't find it. An angel appears we're told in Matthew 28:6 –

The angel spoke to the women: "There is nothing to fear here. I know you're looking for Jesus, the One they nailed to the cross. He is not here. He was raised, just as he said. Come and look at the place where he was placed.

Deuro is the Greek verb here. It's an exclamation. The angel is urging them strongly. Don't just stand there, come and have a look!

We heard about the Disciples being called in John 1 earlier. In the same chapter two other people start to follow Jesus and He says, "Come and discover for yourselves." [The Passion Translation]. This time the action word is again *erchomai*. Come with me. Accompany me. We'll soon find out what is happening together.

X and x came to look inside the box earlier. I recommended that they come. We all need or make recommendations at different times in our lives. "Come" is a recommendation. I thought it would be good. I certainly know that the objects inside are lovely to look at but even better to eat! Let's all look inside the box now.

Hebrews 10:24, 25 [Amplified Bible]: "And let us consider *and* give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love *and* helpful deeds *and* noble activities, not forsaking *or* neglecting to assemble together [as believers], as is the habit of some people, but admonishing (warning, urging, and encouraging) one another, and all the more faithfully as you see the day approaching."

I want to recapture the wonder of Christmas in my life. All the things that have been added primarily in the last 180 years have taken away the essence of what as Christians we believe. A great deal of froth and fizz surrounds the Christmas story. Today I'm giving you the invitation to "Come and see Jesus." Let's all go together to meet Him. He is no longer in the manger. He is no longer a Baby. He is our Lord. He is our Saviour. Let's gaze on Him together and give Him praise as we wonder at His humility as He came to earth. Even though He was God, He became man, so that our relationship with God could be made new. Our lives are transformed as we give our all to God. Let's gaze at the Lamb of God now. I don't want to explore more of God on my own. Let's do it together. Let's honour God together for what He has done for us.

#Prayer Slot 3