

November 28th 2004: Aiming For Christ-Like Commitment: Phil 2:1-18

There are a couple of hymns...sum up the message of Christmas.....one of them is our final song → *Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown when Thou came to earth for me, But in Bethlehem's home there was found no room for thy holy nativity*

It speaks of the truth that undergirds the wonder of our faith

An awesome fact that every NT writer emphasises

That God the Son.....left the glory of heaven.....to be born as a baby

John in the introduction to his Gospelhighlights that fact right from the start

when he writes → v1-2.....then clearly says in v14.....

Paul writing to the Christians at Phillipi says in Phil 2:5-8.....

Think for a moment about those words.....for the claim they present is so incredible that it comes across as just about unbelievable

(I was reading.....University student....Are you really saying that Almighty God who became a human being.....Was born as a helpless baby.....Absurd)

The sad thing I feel....is that in our Western world...and partic amongst church groups This AWESOME fact has become so familiar.....that we no longer give it much thought
We tend not to be surprised by it any more.....or amazed

We hear of the worship of the angels

Of the kings bringing a baby..... gifts fit for a majestic monarch

And because we know who this Baby is....

we may be thrilled by what we hear....but not awestruck

excited but not compelled to fall down before our God in worship and surrender.

In other words we can see the Glory.....that is God becoming man.....

but in our familiarityit doesn't move our hearts as much as it should

John the Apostle spoke out of a totally diff exp to anything we could ever have.....
 when he said in 1:14.....

John speaks of physical seeing.....of being with Jesus.....of exp the power of God Expressed through what He did and said

John gripped the hand of the Word became flesh.....and did so as a friend.... And he saw His glory.....And that exp never dulled

BUT>>>We of course.....see His glory in a different way
We see it by faith

Peter writes in 1 Pet 1:8-9.....

The question that comes to my mind....is whether you have really thought thro Your response to the amazing truth.....that God became a man

Or have you just accepted it.....**Something** you have always been told.....accepted Sung about every Christmas

Do you see this Truth as a personal response of faith on your part
That whatever others may say or think
You know that Almighty Godbecame a human being.....And did so for you

I have been thinking a lot about faith lately

And I recognise that for me.....Faith doesn't mean the complete absent of doubts
In fact there are times when the doubts press in on me

Times when I think about the things I believe.....Can it really be true ??
But then the faith in my heart takes over....Keeps me on course

You see faith does not go against the evidence...(There are plenty of historic facts supporting)

Faith takes us beyond that evidence

(During the terrible days of the Blitz.....[196 from 750 Illustrations]....)

The son had his doubts.....But he had faith in his father's words.....
And on the basis of that faith.....he did something.....He jumped

In the essence that's the sign of faith.....It compels a response
A leap of commitment.....whatever that commitment involves

James says it best in James 2:17-18.....

Faith involves a change in the way we look at life....the way we think
(Marshall Shelley.....[750 illustrations.....109...]...)

But theres something even greater that faith demands of us.....says Paul
For if we say....that by Faith we accept.....that God the Son made the ultimate comm

Then we are to show it....by seeking after the same sacrificial commitment in our lives
Look again at Phil 2:5-6.....

Attitude could so easily be replaced by....Commitment..!!
If I truly believe that Jesus...being God.....did this wonderful thing for me
Then I show it by seeking after the same type of commitment.....

What that means in practical terms is mentioned to some degree by Paul here
Philippians 2:2.....

2:3.....
2:4..... In 2:12 he extends it to include total obedience to God's call upon lives
to work out in our lives what Christ has saved us to be
(look at the gifts...opportunities...)

In v14.....Never do we find Christ complaining

This Christmas.....if by faith you truly believe that Jesus.....
Then what do you need to do.....to work at.....to change...
so that by your deeds
You confirm the reality of your faith ?

Finish by reading from The Glory Of Christmas page 29