



Chaplain's Notes

December 2005

"life is for us"

God is at work

Have you ever thought to yourself "Where is God?" after you have watched the news and seen the latest violence flare up?

I've heard so many people say, "If there really was a God, He'd do something to stop all these terrible things." Others have said to me, "I'll only believe in God if I can actually see Him."

I can understand the frustration people feel when it seems like God is not stepping in to stop what is so obviously evil. People can easily begin to wonder, "Does God really care?" or even go on to think, "Is God really there?"



Listen to the shocking news!

Where is God in times like these?



Christmas is a time where we can remember every year that God really is here, and that He really is at work. Christmas is really the birthday of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom God sent into the world to save it. God is at work!

Unfortunately, though, there are so many people who do not believe this. Or sadder still from my perspective, who have never been told the message of Christmas, and so never even have an opportunity to believe!

For example, last week on Friday afternoon at Preston North East P.S. we had our end of year RI Christmas play. After the play was over, some of the after-school-care kids came in while we were still packing up. Baby Jesus was still lying there in the manger, and one girl came up to me and asked, "What's the baby for?" She had absolutely no idea that Christmas was about the birth of Jesus! For so many kids, it's not really Christmas, but Santamas. This is so sad.

The real meaning of Christmas, and actually a great summary of the whole message of the Bible, can be found in two short sentences from the Christmas story as told in Matthew's Gospel. They are as follows: **"God is with us"** and **"He will save His people"** (Matthew 1:23, 21). I taught this to my Grade 5/6 RI class, and I could see that they understood, and I was so happy about that!

"God is with us." At Christmas, God came to earth in the form of a human being to live amongst us so that we could see Him, touch Him, and understand what He is really like. The people 2000 years ago actually did see God is the flesh! Their questions about whether God was really there in the midst of the turmoil of their world were answered. If we believe their eyewitness accounts as recorded in the Bible, our questions will be answered, too. Jesus after He had risen from the dead said to Thomas (who said he would not believe unless he actually saw Jesus alive):

"Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)

God is here. God is with us. Today. Now. Do you believe this? You are blessed if you do believe!

"He will save His people." At Christmas, God came to earth in order to set us free from all evil powers, forces, and deeds. Wow! But, as you will have noticed, God did not come back then with an attack force of soldiers to annihilate evil! He came in the form of a baby!

Now you may be asking, "How is a baby going to save the world?" Well, I'm glad you asked.

We can learn a number of things from God's plan of first coming as a baby:

1. *God is patient.* He gives us time to get to know Him. He gives us time to recognize that we are doing wrong. He gives us time to "come to our senses."
2. *God is gentle.* He does not force us to change, but wants to "win us over" to the right way.
3. *God is vulnerable.* God gets His hands dirty in helping us be free. He doesn't just sit far off, remote from the action, like a general in the army. As we ultimately see in Jesus, He takes our pain for us, He suffers instead of us on the cross, so that we can be free.

"Free from what?" Free from terrorists? Free from greedy multinationals? Free from drug smugglers? The Bible says, **"He will save His people from their sins."** Yes, we have an external enemy, the devil, but the real enemy we need saving from is ourselves. We are sinful. In our natural hearts we all desire to do what is wrong. We lie, cheat, gossip, hate, lust, are greedy.

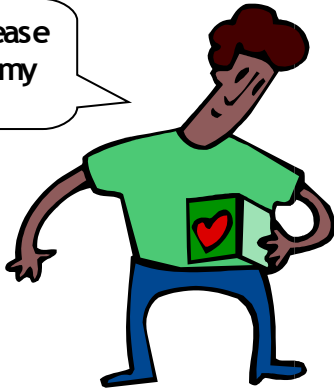
Some people watch it happen.

Others ask "what happened?"

**But then there are those who
make it happen.**

Which will you be?

God, please
change my
heart.



Jesus said these are the root of all evil actions that we see in the world (Mark 7:21-23), and if the world is to be a better place, we need to be changed from within. We all need to be changed. And there is good news. This can happen! Jesus can do it for you!

But there is a catch. Have a look at the sentence again: "He will save His people." It does not say God will save everybody! It says only those who are His people!

So, the billion dollar question is, "How do you become one of 'His people'?"

The answer is: you need to commit your life to following Jesus Christ. You must say something like this to God, "God, I'm sorry for having lived a bad life. I'm sorry for having ignored You. Please forgive me. Thank you for Jesus. I want to follow Him from now on. Please help me."

The Bible says, "**For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.**" (John 3:16)

The Bible says, "**To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.**" (John 1:12)

God is here with us, right now. And God is wanting to save you from yourself, the devil, and the evil world system, if you believe in Him. And when Jesus Christ comes back again with power and glory, those of us who believe shall ultimately be set free from the presence of all evil!

I believe, and God has truly been saving me! My life is so blessed, and I enjoy every day as I live it for God and with God! This experience can be yours, too. And I sincerely hope it is! This is the message I have been sharing here in East Preston / Reservoir for the last five years. And it is the message I will continue to share wherever God leads me in the world. And I hope that you, too, will get involved (if you are not already) in spreading the good news about Jesus Christ to others. One thing is for sure – the world is in desperate need of it!

God bless you. God loves you. And so do I!

Let us pray:

*Dear Lord Jesus Christ,
You really are the best in the universe!
Thank you that You love me so much,
that You came into the world to
die for me, so that I could be set
free!*

*I praise You, Lord!
Help me to continue to live for You
every day, and may everyone
around me be blessed through
what I do. Let me be Your hands
and feet to bring good news into
their lives!*

Amen!

**God bless you this Christmas, have
a happy New Year, and I look
forward to seeing you all again
someday!**

You are invited to a ...

Christmas Service

with a kids' nativity play

Sunday 18th
December
4pm – 5.15pm



Preston Nth East
Primary School Hall



PLUS , meet the new Chaplain,
and say farewell to the old!!

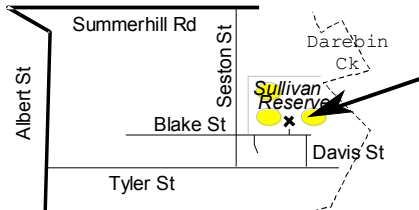


Christmas Day under the gum trees"

Sunday 25th December, 2005

Sullivan Reserve Sports Pavilion, Blake St, Reservoir (Mel. 19 D9)

**Celebrate
Jesus' birthday
with me!**



10.00 – 10.40 *Jesus' birthday celebration!*

11.00 onwards *Picnic BBQ lunch*

Join me before you go off to lunch with family and friends, or stay and enjoy a FULLY CATERED lunch with me! (RSVP Wed 21st, ph 8430 8574)