



It will soon be Christmas, I'm sure you are looking forward to it!

This morning we are going to be thinking about some people who made **THE GREAT DISCOVERY**

I wonder have you ever discovered something? Maybe found something special in a cupboard, or perhaps discovered a great toy or game in a shop? It's really exciting isn't.

There have been some wonderful discoveries such as finding gold coins in the ground or maybe special jewellery. Some in the lab have discovered wonderful cures for terrible illnesses.

A friend of mine told me a little while ago that had a call from a woman, "who is this?" he said, and she replied: "I am your sister!" They had been separated when very little. What a surprise can you imagine it! Another birthday to celebrate.

Well Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of someone very special coming into this world.

Special people, important people are born in smart hospitals or palaces surrounded by medical staff.

When this special baby was born it was in a stable, like a big garden shed, a place where all the animals are kept.

No-one knew about it except the parents.

However, God wanted people to know about His precious and only Son Jesus who was born into this world. But he didn't go and tell the government, nor put it in the papers or on social media but he told some local shepherds out in the fields looking after sheep.

Being a shepherd is not a nice job, long hours outside, often cold and dark. The life of a shepherd was usually pretty boring. Not much happened, there they were night after night looking after their sheep. Away in the hills they were far from town and their families. It was hard and dirty with all those smelly sheep. Nothing new, nothing changed. – always the same!

Yet one night was a night like no other. Suddenly the sky blazed with bright light. Then **an angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.**

Can you imagine staring into the sky and suddenly seeing an angel? They could hear someone speaking. What was he saying? **the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.**

There is plenty of bad news around we could all do with some good news to bring a bit of happiness, Where could they find this?

**Today, yes Today! in the town of David (That is Bethlehem) a Saviour has been born to you;**

A saviour is someone who helps you, he rescues you, if you are lost he will find you, if you are trapped he will free you, if you are hurt he will heal you, if you are sorry you have said or done something wrong he will give you a new start.

Who could this be? **he is Christ the Lord.** Who? Lord means boss, Here **the Lord** means that this baby is no less than God himself coming into His world! even though he is just a baby! **WOW!**

Well the shepherds, needed a little more to go on: How can they find this saviour? The angel says: **This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."**

**When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds looked at each other and said - Let's GO**

**So they hurried off to Bethlehem to see what the Lord had told them about –which was not far - and much smaller than Kings Norton. When they arrived they found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.**

**MANGER X** A manger is a long trough from which donkeys or cattle feed, they filled it with hay and put the newborn baby in it.

Well an angel had also appeared to Joseph in a dream saying that Mary “**will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.**” Matt1:21

They think “What is this all about **sin** and **saviour**? What’s that mean?”

This baby grew up to be a young boy, teenager and then a man. The bible says he was like you and I in every way except - he never did or say anything wrong – which makes him unlike me and you and every other person on this planet.

Jesus went around doing good, healing people, teaching about the way of God, in fact he was so good that some hated Him for it, - It is the same today.



Finally he was betrayed by his friend, handed over to soldiers who beat him until he was nearly dead and then arranged for him to be cruelly put to death on a **cross** - Expand

The Bible says that it was God’s plan that he should die, it had been predicted that this would happen. That is why he was born into this world, to die, to be buried and to rise again from the grave. Yes amazingly he rose again, many saw him alive, - not to die again - but to live forever.

So why did he die? The bible says that God is Just and therefore one day he will punish all who do wrong. But because God is also loving He planned that his Son Jesus would be punished instead. Jesus took the punishment that I deserve. What amazing love.

Now anyone who looks to him, who put their hand up and say ‘I have done wrong’ can be forgiven. Yes, anyone, and be made clean and have a new start with God. That is what the cross is all about.

The shepherds **when they had seen him**, were so excited they **spread the word about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. TELL**

Just as I am telling you about Him this morning. Many have heard and made the great discovery.

And what is it? - That I can be **GOD’S FRIEND.**

Yes to be his friend, His child, I have discovered friendship with God through Christ Jesus.

The shepherds may have spent much time gazing up into the dark sky, God must have seemed a long way off. Not any longer!

**FIND** Many have found they can be God’s friend. Jesus who is alive is changing the lives of people today. All around the world many have made the great discovery.

**Compare present glitzy wrapping contents quickly gone – brown wrapping treasure within**

This morning we have thought about Christmas, the birth of Jesus, this great event in history – and it was first discovered by some of the least likely people.

So enjoy your Christmas with family and good food, but may you also have a great Christmas filled with Peace, with hope, with love and with Joy.

Song - *Come and join the celebration*      Prayer