



Joyfully trusting, following & sharing Jesus

1. You're walking with a friend in the local shopping centre when you pass by a nativity scene. Your friend turns to you and asks, 'what's the deal with the whole baby in a manger? Why did Jesus come?' How would you answer?
2. Advent is the season of the year when we particularly remember Christ's promise to return. Is Jesus' promise something that you often reflect upon? How does this impact your life now?
3. Christmas we celebrate the first coming of Christ. Is this something that you celebrate (beyond our cultural celebrations)? If so, why?
4. From Luke 2:10-11, what do we need to understand about ourselves for Christ's coming to be good news of great joy?
5. How do the following passages help us understand why Jesus came? Matthew 1:21, 9:13, 20:28; Luke 1:68, 2:10-11, 30; John 1:29, 3:16; Romans 8:3; Galatians 4:4-5; 1 Tim 3:16; Heb 2:9-17.

Lines of Application

6. Without ever ceasing to be fully God, God the Son became truly human. What does this reveal about God's commitment to our salvation? (Phil 2:6-8). How does this knowledge help you trust and follow Jesus in areas you find difficult? (Rom 8:32; 1 Cor 1:8-9; Lk 11:9-13)?
7. Recognising that Christ came to save us from our sins helps us in our relationships. Choose one of the following to discuss and reflect on:
 - a. Christ came to save me from sin frees me to face up to my own sin. I don't have to pretend to be something I'm not but can die to sin and rise to new life from a place of love and grace. Discuss.
 - b. Christ came to save us from sin helps me respond graciously when someone sins against me (John 8:1-11). Discuss
 - c. Remembering that Christ came to save us from sin means that I won't be surprised when Christians are still attracted to sin and prone to sin. Recognising this about us helps me to discuss it gently with them. Discuss.
8. 'When...any one of us...looks up to him, to Jesus Christ, a momentous change takes place [...] A great and enduring light brightly dawns on such a person [...] Such a person experiences joy in the midst of his sorrows and sufferings, much as he still may sigh and grumble. Not a cheap and superficial joy that that passes, but deep-seated, lasting joy. It transforms man in his sadness into a fundamentally joyful being. We may admit it; he has got something to laugh at [...] not a mockery, but an open and relaxing laughter [...] honest and sincere laughter, coming from the bottom of man's heart. Such light and joy and laughter are ours when we look up to him, to Jesus Christ'. (Karl Barth) Does the coming of Jesus give you this joy? Why / Why not?