

“Let's go...and see” Luke chapter 2 verse 15

The world is full of things people think they know about God, Jesus, the bible and religious faith in general. Many talk about these things with great confidence, even though they may never even have read a bible or gone to a church for more than weddings, christenings or funerals.

So, according to their thinking, God is an invention of the human imagination, or some impersonal force, Jesus, if he existed, was no more than a teacher, or a good example, the bible was written by people with a vested interest, and has been corrupted by human interference and multiple copying, religious faith is an illusion and a tool of social control. Probably in no other area is so much rubbish talked by so many people who know so little.

In ministry I have often asked people if they believe in God. Most do actually acknowledge that there may well be something other than what we can perceive with our physical human senses, but they have no idea what it is. Even if they believe in a personal God, they usually have never considered that he would have any interest in their individual lives.

But the bible makes it abundantly clear that God cares deeply about every individual person on the planet and longs that they should turn to him to know him personally. The apostle Peter says, “God is patient, because he wants everyone to turn from sin and no one to be lost”, and we are very familiar with the words of John; “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.” Jesus came to do personal work in the hearts of individual lives, bringing them to God, and he is still doing that today.

As we grow to adulthood, we all have a tendency to remain at a comfortable stage of knowledge and experience. We like to settle. We become less and less able to learn new things and break out of the routines and securities we make for ourselves. That is what we call our 'comfort zone'. Even if we get an intimation of something greater than what we feel safe with, we are reluctant to step outside what we know.

But one of the shepherds who hear the voice of the angel announcing the birth of Christ had a little more to him, urging the others, “Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.”

Whoever we are, at times in our lives we will have opportunities to move on towards faith and grow in faith. Then we have a choice; to stay where we are in the comfort of what we are familiar with, or to “go and see.” I'd encourage you today to go and see.

Prayer.

Father, in all the things that are said in the world about you, about Jesus, about the bible and about faith, there is something that is profoundly true, and only there can we find what gives us life. Help us all, whether we are already believers or yet to come to faith, not be content to languish in the familiarity of what we know but to have the courage to step into what is new. In Jesus' name, amen.

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