

The Good News We All Need To Hear



Winter in Britain can often be a rather gloomy season writes *Becca Turnbull*. The nights draw in, the permanent state of blowing your nose commences, the rain and grey sky can seem endless (especially in Exeter), and the wishful hope of snow often never arrives. It can feel uninspiring, dreary and never-ending.

Thankfully, in the midst of the long winter, we have a beacon of much-needed hope and joy: Christmas. The lights, the carols, the food, the friends, the presents. So much of what Christmas brings is a welcome sight during winter. Yet, beyond all this, the reason for the season, is to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Jesus was no ordinary baby. The name Jesus means 'to rescue'. Just as the Christmas festivities bring much-needed cheer during our often-depressing winter, Jesus came to bring hope into a dark world. He was God's own Son who came to earth to rescue a sinful and broken humanity.

What does that mean? If we take a minute to think back over the past 24 hours, there are probably some good things that we have done, but also some things we would rather keep quiet about,

or like to forget altogether. Losing our temper at a friend or colleague? Getting frustrated at our children? Running that red light when we probably could have stopped? The list goes on. There are a lot of 'not so great' things that we do every day that do not please God. We may promise to do better next time. But however hard we try we are not good enough.

That is why we need Jesus. He was born to save us from our sins. He is enough. What wonderful and amazing news! From the crib to the cross, He was the light in the darkness. God's rescue plan for our broken lives and world has a face and a name. Amid political chaos, wars, environmental crises, and our own personal struggles, we can look to Jesus. He is King of the whole world. So this festive season, as well as enjoying the merriment that breaks into our long wintry season, why not consider the birth of Jesus that pierces the darkness and brings lasting light and hope? Jesus is the good news we all need to hear this Christmas.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES AT
ST LEONARD'S CHURCH
EXETER

SUN 15 DEC
6.30 PM CAROL SERVICE

SUN 22 DEC
6.30 PM CASUAL CAROLS

TUE 24 DEC
4.00 PM FAMILY CAROLS
11.15 PM HOLY COMMUNION

WED 25 DEC
10.00 AM CHRISTMASS SERVICE

Today a Saviour is born to you, he is Christ the Lord

What I Found When We Lost Everything

Lucy discusses the difficult circumstances that led her to discover true freedom.



From a very young age I was aware that my parents and I believed in God. They read the Bible to me and encouraged my interest in Christianity. My dad and I served in our local church, and I got confirmed at age 11. But I found the services boring, and I was embarrassed to wear white robes for assisting the ministers. After many arguments with my family, I gave up this role and went to church rarely.

I still believed in God and spoke to him, but I felt angry towards him. I thought I was a good person, and that God should reward me. I worked hard at school and was kind to people. But most of my friends were smarter and more accomplished than me. So I assumed that God didn't love me, because he'd made me inferior to others.

At university I met believers my own age and I realised that being a Christian meant more than simply believing in God. They talked about Jesus and read the Bible. They lived differently to those around them, and built their lives on God's promises and instructions in scripture. When I studied abroad for a year I met more Christians, and was struck again by their relationship with Jesus being at the centre of their lives.

Then things began to unravel at home. One of my brothers entered a young offenders' institution, my dad's business collapsed through poor decision making, and we became bankrupt. We lost our family home, and my dad spent some time in hospital as his mental state reached crisis point. It was a deeply traumatic time for us all, and I struggled with depression.

But in the midst of this darkness God's light shone into my heart. He showed me that even something as firm as a solid family can crumble, and that the true and firm foundation is God. He is always there. I was confronted with the human weakness of my family members, especially my dad who I had thought was beyond reproach. The enormity of my own sin was also revealed to me, and I was able to accept the huge sacrifice Jesus made for me on the cross. That is how he demonstrates his love for us.

Once I grasped these truths, I became much less angry with God and my relationship with Jesus grew. I began to read the Bible with a new understanding, and I joined a new church. I moved to Exeter for work in 2016 and came to St Leonard's Church.

Now I still sin and struggle with God's plan for my life not aligning with what I want and think I deserve. But I'm still amazed that Jesus died and rose again for me. My new life in Christ brings true freedom to love God and to love other people.

