

# *The Reason for Christmas* 聖誕節的因由

## Luke 路加福音 2:8-20

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We gather to celebrate Christmas at the end of another year. As we do so this year, we are mindful of major conflicts in the Middle East and Russia.

我們又聚在一起在一年的年底慶祝聖誕節。今年，我們一面慶祝一面關注中東和俄羅斯的重大衝突。

With tens of thousands upon tens of thousands of lives lost, families and communities are fractured and stricken.

數以萬計的人喪生，家庭和社區支離破碎，飽受摧殘。

Those are the two big ones in the media. But in 2023 alone there were 114 wars globally. 這是媒體上的兩個重大事件。但光是 2023 年，全球就發生了 114 場戰爭。

That is defining war as an active conflict that has claimed more than 1,000 lives. 這裡戰爭的定義是仍在進行中的一場已奪走多過 1,000 人的生命的衝突。

Of the past 3,400 years of recorded history, there have only been 268 years where there was no recorded war—a meagre 8 per cent of recorded history.

在過去 3400 年有記載的歷史中，只有 268 年沒有發生過戰爭，僅佔這段有記載歷史的 8%。

In more recent history, from 1945 to 2015 there are only 26 days where there has been no war somewhere in the world.

在最近的歷史中，從 1945 年到 2015 年，世界上只有 26 天沒有發生過戰爭。

So, what are we to make of the message at the heart of Christmas – the promise of peace? 那麼，我們該如何理解聖誕節的核心信息——平安的承諾呢？

It was just read out to us: *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests.* (2:14)

我們剛讀到，「*在至高之處榮耀歸與上帝！在地上平安歸與他所喜悅的人！*」(2:14)

We desire peace in relationships, our world is in desperate need of peace, and this bit of the bible promises peace. This is the reason for Christmas.

我們渴望人際關係中的平安，我們的世界迫切需要平安，而這段經文也承諾了平安。這就是聖誕節的因由。

So, what is this peace that the birth of Jesus promises and how do we get it?

那麼，耶穌誕生所應許的平安是什麼？我們如何才能得到它呢？

I've got three things we see briefly from these verses: **TREASURE THE MESSAGE, FIND PEACE, and LIVE FEARLESSLY.**

我從這些經文中簡要地看到了三件事：珍惜信息、找著平安和無畏地生活

### **TREASURE THE CHRISTMAS MESSAGE 珍惜聖誕的信息**

Hearing the Christmas story really isn't easy to do when you've heard it so many times. There is an over-familiarity with it.

當你聽過很多次聖誕故事時，真正聽到它並不容易。對它有一種過度的熟悉。

To hear well is important in life, but really important in this passage. The shepherds were told something by the angels then they went and saw that it was as they were told.

善於傾聽在生活中很重要，但在這段經文中更為重要。天使告訴牧羊人一些事情，然後他們去看，發現事情確實如他們被告知的那般。

Then in v.17, when they saw Jesus, they spread the word about everything that they told them about the child.

然後在第 17 節，當他們看到耶穌時，他們就把天使論這孩子的話傳開了。

In v18 we read: *and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherd said to them.*

在第 18 節我們讀到，聽見的人都詫異牧羊人對他們所說的話。

There is an even deeper hearing in v.19. It says: *Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

第 19 節有更深入的聆聽。經上說，馬利亞卻把這一切的事存在心裏，反覆思考。

This is more than merely hearing some news. We all hear news each day and for the most part, it has no effect on us.

這不僅是聽到一些信息。我們每天都會聽到新聞，但大多數情況下對我們沒有影響。

Those with children know the experience of telling them something and it not being followed through on. Those with husbands too!

有孩子的人都知道告訴他們一些事情卻沒有得到執行的經驗。有老公的也會知道啊！

Did we hear the information? Yes. Did we give it our attention, think out the implications, really understand? No.

我們聽到信息了嗎？是的。我們是否給予了關注，思考了其意義，真正理解了？不。

Firstly, we are told here that God speaks to, and through, the ordinary.

首先，這裡告訴我們，上帝對，並且透過，普通平凡的人說話。

The shepherds got an angel, and everyone else got a shepherd. Just ordinary, low-class, shepherds.

天使來到牧羊人那裡，其他人只有牧羊人。只是普通、低等的牧羊人。

The Biblical authors got a special revelation from God...Moses, Isaiah, and John, to name a few.

聖經作者從上帝那裡得到了特殊的啟示……摩西、以賽亞和約翰，僅舉幾例。

The rest of us get a book. It's a book that is so easy to not pay attention to.

我們其餘的人都只得到一本書。這是一本很容易不被注意的書。

Secondly, we are told here Mary is a model for us. She heard the news from the angel, and now from the shepherds.

其次，這裡告訴我們馬利亞是我們的榜樣。她從天使那裡聽到了這個信息，現在又從牧羊人那裡聽到了同樣的信息。

We are told she treasures and ponders in her heart what she has heard.

我們被告知，她把這一切的事存在心裏，反覆思考。

To PONDER is to put into context, and to connect. It's connecting this news with the rest of my life.

反覆思考就是將其置於上下文中並進行連結。將這個信息與我的餘生聯繫起來。

How does it explain it? What does it mean for the way I'm living? It's a focused mental discipline.

它如何解釋我的餘生呢？對我的生活方式意味著什麼？是一種專注的精神心理訓練。

Treasuring is a little more emotional. It's to keep it alive. To keep the fire burning. To relish. To savour.

存在心裏要更多的情感。是為了讓它活著。讓火熱繼續燃燒。細細品味。津津有味。

Mary doesn't just know the news of the arrival of God intellectually, she fans the flame in her heart.

瑪利亞不只在理智上知道上帝降臨的信息，她還在心中煽動火熱。

She takes this news into the centre of her being until it means everything to her. It's an attitude.

她將這個信息牢記在心，直到它對她來說意味著生命的一切。這是一種態度。

We shouldn't underestimate our ability to hear and not hear the good news of Christianity.

我們不應該低估我們聽到和不聽到基督教好消息的能力。

We don't want to be like the crowd that just marvels, we want to be like Mary and ponder...treasure the good news of Jesus Christ. To hear well the gospel.

我們不要像群眾那樣只是詫異驚嘆，我們要像馬利亞一樣反覆思考……把耶穌基督的好信息珍存在心裏。好好聽福音。

## FIND PEACE 找著平安

When we do hear well, we discover the remarkable promise of peace.  
當我們好好聆聽時，我們會發現非凡的平安的應許。

Take a look at vv13-14: *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God, and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”*

看 13-14 節，忽然，有一大隊天兵同那天使讚美上帝說：14 「在至高之處榮耀歸與上帝！在地上平安歸與他所喜悅的人！」

It’s a very specific promise of peace. It’s peace for those to whom God’s grace, favour and mercy rests.

這是一個非常具體的平安承諾。對那些蒙上帝恩典、恩惠和憐憫的人所給的平安。

On the surface, this looks like a promise for just a select group, but it has to be read in light of v.10.

從表面上看，這看起來像是針對特定群體的承諾，但必須根據第 10 節來解讀。

Verse 10 reads: *the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*

第 10 節說，那天使對他們說：「不要懼怕！看哪！因為我報給你們大喜的信息，是關乎萬民的：11 因今天在大衛的城裏，為你們生了救主，就是主基督。」

Luke is saying that one of the great benefits of grasping the good news about God’s grace to us in Jesus Christ, is you now have peace with God.

路加說，掌握神在耶穌基督裡給我們恩典的好信息的最大好處之一就是你現在與神和好。

This is crucial. One of the important themes of the New Testament is that before we embrace God’s grace and mercy, we are at war with God.

這一點至關重要。新約的重要主題之一是，在我們擁抱神的恩典和憐憫之前，我們是在與神交戰。

Most people don’t believe that. Most would say they don’t believe in God, or they are indifferent to God, but hardly anyone says they are angry at God or hate God.

大多數人不相信這一點。大多數人會說他們不相信上帝，或者他們對上帝漠不關心，但幾乎沒有人說他們對上帝生氣或仇恨上帝。

Romans 8:7 says: *The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God’s law.*

《羅馬書》8:7 說，體貼肉體就是與上帝為敵，對上帝的律法不順服，事實上也無法順服。

Christianity says our relationship with God is not disbelief and indifference, it is hostility.  
基督教說我們與神的關係不是不信或冷漠，而是敵意。

Both the religious person and the irreligious person are overtly asserting their independence from God.

虔誠的宗教人士和非宗教人士都公開宣稱自己獨立於上帝之外。

They openly declare they want to live life their way.

他們公開宣稱他們想要按照自己的方式生活。

The religious person covertly asserts their independence from God.

虔誠的宗教人士暗中宣稱他們獨立於上帝之外。

The religious person reads the Bible, prays, and follows the 10 commandments, with the expectation it wins God's approval and goodwill.

虔誠的宗教人士閱讀聖經、禱告並遵守十誡，期望贏得上帝的認可和善意。

It's an attempt to control. It's a declaration that we don't trust God.

這是嘗試去控制。是宣告我們不信靠上帝。

No matter who we are, in our nature we are hostile to God.

無論我們是誰，我們的歸根究底的本性都是與神為敵的。

Particularly in the Western world we are committed to the idea that we will only be truly happy if we are in charge of our own lives.

尤其是在西方世界，我們堅信只有掌控自己的人生才能真正幸福快樂。

The mark of a real Christian is they come to see that hostility.

真正基督徒的標誌是他們能夠開始看到這種敵意。

They have seen not only have they done wrong things, but even the right things they have done have been done for the wrong reasons.

他們不僅看到自己做了錯誤的事情，而且甚至他們所做的正確的事情也是出於錯誤的原因而做的。

Christmas is the beginning of what God does for us through Jesus Christ to initiate a peace treaty.

聖誕節是神透過耶穌基督為我們所做的事情的開始，以啟動和平條約。

Grace and peace go together. Those who grasp the grace of God are those who have peace with God.

恩典與平安是相輔相成的。那些抓住神的恩典的人就是那些與神和好的人。

At the very least it means Christians ought to be peacemakers.

這意味著基督徒至少應該成為和平的締造者。

Peacemakers are people who have admitted their wrongs, flaws and sins to God - they have swallowed their pride and found peace with God.

使人和睦的人向神承認自己的錯誤、缺陷和罪—他們放下了驕傲，與神和好。

When that happens between you and God, it means you can go out into the world and do it with others.

當這種情況發生在你和上帝之間時，就意味著你可以走出去，與他人做一樣的事。

Christians know how to admit they are wrong, how to forgive, how to reconcile.

基督徒知道如何承認自己錯了，如何寬恕，如何和好。

Peacemakers between races and classes, family members, neighbours, and colleagues.

是種族、階級、家庭成員、鄰居和同事之間的和平締造者。

Peace comes to those who grasp God's grace, and to the world through them.

平安臨到那些抓住神的恩典的人，並藉著他們臨到世界。

### LIVE FEARLESSLY 無所畏懼地生活

Peace is possible for those who take into their lives the good news of God's grace to them in Jesus Christ.

對於那些將神在耶穌基督裡給他們的恩典的好信息帶入自己生命的人來說，平安是可能的。

Being at peace with God leads to a fearless living.

與神和好會帶來無所畏懼的生活。

Have a look at v8-10: *there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."*

看看第 8-10 節，在同一個區域的野外有牧羊人，夜間值班看守羊群。有主的一個使者站在他們旁邊，主的榮光四面照著他們，牧羊人就很懼怕。那天使對他們說：「不要懼怕！看哪！因為我報給你們大喜的信息，是關乎萬民的：

The shepherds were terrified. The angels tell them not to be afraid. They say: *Do not be afraid. I bring you good news.*

牧羊人都嚇壞了。天使告訴他們不要懼怕。他們說：不要懼怕！我報給你們大喜的信息。

Embracing the good news of Christmas means we can be at peace and live without fear.

擁抱聖誕節的好信息意味著我們可以平安無所畏懼地生活。

What normally happens in the Bible is that when God shows up people are terrified.  
聖經中通常發生的事情是，當上帝出現時，人們會感到懼怕。

The first time is in the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve sinned.  
第一次是在亞當和夏娃犯罪後的伊甸園。

Adam and Eve didn't experience fear until they started to live independently of God.  
亞當和夏娃直到開始獨立於上帝而生活時才開始經歷恐懼。

When we have a perfect relationship with God there is no fear in life.  
當我們與神有完美的關係時，生命中就沒有恐懼了。

The vast majority live lives of fear - the fear of rejection, failure, bad things happening, the future, and death.

絕大多數人都活在恐懼之中——害怕被拒絕、失敗、壞事發生、未來和死亡。

We live each day trying to earn self-worth, and people's respect. If we don't constantly get affirmation and love from people we just die.

我們每天都在努力贏得自我價值和人們的尊重。如果我們不能不斷地得到人們的肯定和愛，我們就會死。

We are slaves to our performance and other people's perceptions. It is a life of fear because we know we can't control any of those things, let alone the future.

我們是自己表現和他人看法的奴隸。這是一種恐懼的生命，因為我們知道我們無法控制任何這些事情，更不用說未來了。

It's hard enough trying to manage people's perceptions of us let alone our own future.

試圖管理人們對我們的看法已經夠困難的了，更不用說我們自己的未來了。

It's why when bad things happen, we get freaked out because it is another reminder we are not in control.

這就是為什麼當不好的事情發生時，我們會恐懼，因為這再次提醒我們無法控制。

We are especially afraid of death. In death, we lose everything. We are filled with fear, but we fill our lives with distraction to not think about it.

我們特別害怕死亡。死亡後，我們失去了一切。我們充滿了恐懼，但我們用分心去填滿生命，以至於不必去想它。

Distraction so that we can't listen well to the good news.

分心使我們無法好好聆聽好消息。

We are our own masters, and we are unqualified for the job, and we know it! That is why we live in fear.

我們是自己的主人，而我們沒有資格勝任這份工作，我們也知道這一點！這就是為什麼我們活在恐懼之中。

We have taken God's crown and placed it on our heads - so to speak - and we are way over our heads.

可以說，我們是拿起了上帝的冠冕，把它戴在自己的頭上，而這是超越了我們的頭。

We are usurpers to a throne we don't deserve, nor are qualified for, and on the first Christmas the real King turned up and we are terrified!

我們是篡奪我們不配，也沒有資格獲得的王位的人，而在第一個聖誕節，真正的王出現了，我們非常懼怕！

His beauty shows us our ugliness. His power shows us our impotence. His light shows us our darkness.

祂的美麗向我們展示了我們的醜陋。祂的力量讓我們看到了我們的無能。祂的光照亮了我們的黑暗。

Christmas is the solution! Verse 11: *a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.*

聖誕節就是解決方案！第 11 節，*為你們生了救主，就是主基督。*

Jesus is the saviour. To have peace and live fearlessly we need to abandon every form of self-salvation and rest in his salvation.

耶穌是救世主。要擁有平安並無所畏懼的生活，我們需要放棄一切形式的自我拯救，並安息在祂的救恩中。

The baby born in the manger is the LORD. Lord is translated from the Greek word KURIOS. 馬槽裡所生的嬰孩就是主基督。主基督是從希臘文 KURIOS 翻譯而來的。

It is a significant word in the New Testament. Its parallel in Hebrew is Yahweh...the covenant name of God.

這是新約中一個重要的字。它在希伯來文的對應詞是耶和華...上帝的聖約之名。

The baby born in the manger is not just a saviour or a sage, he is the creator God.

馬槽裡出生的嬰兒不只是救世主或聖人，他是造物主上帝。

If the God who made all things is prepared to humble himself and come to earth for us, he is trustworthy.

如果創造萬物的上帝願意謙卑自己並為我們來到世上，祂是值得信賴的。

Way back in 1961, the Soviet Union put a man in space. The 27-year-old Yuri Gagarin orbited the earth in 89 minutes.



早在 1961 年，蘇聯就將人類送上太空。27 歲的尤里·加加林用 89 分鐘繞地球一圈。

Nikita Khrushchev was head of the Soviet Union at the time.

尼基塔·赫魯雪夫是當時的蘇聯領導人。

He said of the event that they had been into space and God was nowhere to be found. There is no God up there.

他談到這件事時說，他們已經進入太空，但上帝卻無處可尋。那裡沒有上帝。

The great Oxford scholar, CS Lewis, wrote an article in response to that comment called "The Seeing Eye".

偉大的牛津學者路易斯寫了一篇文章來回應這一評論，名為「看得見的眼睛」。

He wrote: *The Russians, I am told, report that they have not found God in outer space... Looking for God—or Heaven—by exploring space is like reading or seeing all of Shakespeare's plays in the hope that you will find Shakespeare as one of the characters.*

他寫道：據我所知，俄羅斯人報告說他們沒有在外太空找到上帝……透過探索太空來尋找上帝或天堂就像閱讀或觀看莎士比亞的所有戲劇，希望你會發現莎士比亞是其中之一的角色。

*Shakespeare is in one sense present at every moment in every play. But he is never present in the same way as Hamlet.*

從某種意義上說，莎士比亞在每部戲劇的每一刻都在場。但他從來沒有像哈姆雷特那樣以同樣的方式存在。

*My point is that, if God does exist, He is related to the universe more as an author is related to a play than as one object in the universe is related to another.*

我的觀點是，如果上帝確實存在，那麼祂與宇宙的關係更像是作者與戲劇的關係，而不是宇宙中一個物體與另一個物體的關係。

He went on to ask the question, *how then do we find God, or avoid him?*

他接著問，那麼我們如何找到上帝，或避開他呢？

He first answered how we avoid finding God. *Avoid silence, avoid solitude. Concentrate on money, sex, status, health and on your own grievances. Keep the radio on. Live in a crowd.*

他首先回答了我們如何避免尋找到上帝。避免沉默，避免孤獨。專注於金錢、性、地位、健康和自己的不滿。保持收音機開著。生活在人群中。

*Use plenty of sedation. If you must read books, select them very carefully. But you'd be safer to stick to the newspapers.*

使用大量鎮靜劑。如果你必須閱讀書籍，請非常仔細地選擇它們。但若你堅持看報紙會比較更安全。

*To some, God is discoverable everywhere, to others, nowhere.*

對某些人來說，上帝無所不在，但對其他人來說，卻無處可尋。

Lewis wrote that he had less advice about how to find God because it was God who found him. God comes to us.

路易斯寫道，他對如何找到上帝的建議較少，因為是上帝找著了他。神來到我們身邊。

His point was that the only way to know the God who made everything is if he writes himself into the history of the world he has made.

他的觀點是，要認識創造萬物的上帝，唯一方法就是祂把自己寫進祂所創造的世界的歷史中。

The claim of Christmas is infinitely wonderful.

聖誕節的宣告是無限精彩美妙的。

Christmas means God has looked at the world he created, he could see the real trouble we are in, the hostility, chaos, and conflict both external and internal, and he wrote himself into history as Jesus Christ.

聖誕節意味著上帝審視了祂所創造的世界，祂看到了我們所面臨的真正麻煩，外在和內在的敵意、混亂和衝突，祂將自己作為耶穌基督寫進了歷史。

He didn't come to simply embrace us but to die for us. To save us.

祂來不只是為了擁抱我們，而是為了我們而死。為了拯救我們。

He lost his peace so we could have peace forever.

祂失去了平安，所以我們才能永遠擁有平安。

Do not fear. Look at Christmas. To a degree, we grab hold of this good news and ponder and treasure it, to that degree our fears diminish, and peace rises.

不要害怕。看著聖誕節。當我們越抓住這個好信息、反覆思考並珍存在心裏時，我們的恐懼就越會減少，平安就越會升起。