

A Christmas Cracker

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[0 : 00] Well, if we could, for a wee while, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read in the Bible.

And I just want us to read Matthew chapter 2 and verses 1 and 2 again. Matthew chapter 2 and verse 1.

It says, Hi boys and girls, it's lovely to see you this morning. I'm so glad you stayed.

You stayed in the church. Usually you go out to Sunday school, but it's always nice to have you in and to stay here. And I hope you picked up your Christmas cracker. Did you all get one? Some of you did. Some of you did. Well, if you didn't get one, you can get one later on, okay?

You get one after the service. And we're going to talk about a Christmas cracker in a moment. But I'm sure, boys and girls, that you're getting very excited for Christmas, are you? Yes. Because, well, there's only how many sleeps till Christmas?

[1 : 30] Two. Two. Sorry for the person who said one. There's two. And it's, isn't that so exciting? Two sleeps. Because on Christmas Day, you get to open all your Christmas presents.

And I'm sure that you've been buying lots of Christmas presents, haven't you? You've bought Christmas presents for that someone special in your life? Me? Didn't you?

No? Okay. I'm sure you wrote me a Christmas card. No? Okay. Maybe you can get me something in the January sales then, yeah?

But, you know, at this time of year, well, we buy Christmas presents and we send Christmas cards and we put up our Christmas tree with lots and lots of decorations and, well, we have Christmas parties and you had a Christmas concert last Monday night.

So there's lots going on and there's a lot happening to do with Christmas. And it's all building up to Christmas Day. Because on Christmas Day, we get to open all our presents and we come together for Christmas dinner and we play with our toys and we play all our games.

[2 : 33] And there's so much excitement about Christmas, isn't there? There's loads of good things to be excited about. But, you know, it's also good for us to remember what Christmas is all about.

It's good for us to remember what Christmas is about because Christmas is all about Jesus. Jesus, we have to remember Jesus in all our excitement and our fun.

Because Jesus is so important. And we can't forget about Jesus, can we? No. We can't forget what Jesus has done for us. Because Jesus is the most important person in the world.

And I want everyone to love Jesus and follow Jesus and trust in Jesus. And this morning I want us to think about how important Jesus is by using your Christmas cracker.

Okay? Now, when you see Christmas crackers, I'm sure, well, I'm sure you can see this one. But it might be easier if I hold up this one. It's a bit easier to see this one, isn't it?

[3 : 35] It's a bit bigger. Isn't it? So I took this big Christmas cracker with me today. But I'm sure you've all seen Christmas crackers before, haven't you? Yeah, you've seen Christmas crackers.

I'm sure you've pulled Christmas crackers before. You've pulled them. And I'm sure that when you'll sit down on Christmas Day, you'll have a Christmas cracker. And you'll have your Christmas dinner. And you'll pull your Christmas cracker, won't you? But you know, Christmas crackers, they've been around for a really, really, really, really long time. Because Christmas crackers have been around for 170 years.

That's a long time, isn't it? They've been, and they were first made by a man called Tom Smith.

That's who made Christmas crackers. And boys and girls, you will love Tom Smith's job.

Because Tom Smith made sweeties. That's what he made. He made lots and lots of sweeties. And wouldn't that be a great job? You could make sweeties and then eat as many sweeties as you like.

[4 : 32] Be a great job to have. But Tom Smith, he started making Christmas crackers by wrapping up little sweets. And putting a little riddle inside. And then he started selling them.

But they didn't sell very well. So one night, he was sitting by the fire. And you know when you sit by the fire, you hear all these little bangs. All the coal is popping. And the wood is popping.

And it's going bang and snap. And he thought, wouldn't it be really good if you could put a wee bang inside a cracker? So that's what he did. And that's why we have these little bangs that go.

When we pull the cracker, there's a bang or a snap. Isn't there? We have this little bang noise. And that's because Tom Smith, he put them inside crackers. But you know, crackers, they not only have that bang when you pull it.

They also have three little things inside it. And you can get, well, you can get crackers. Loads of different types of crackers. You can get big ones, can't you? With lots of things. There's loads inside this.

[5 : 30] Can you hear it? Loads of things inside this one. And you can get little crackers. But you'll find, have you pulled it already? Kara's pulled it already. Oh, that's no use. You'll have to get another one.

But inside Christmas crackers, there's three little things that you get in every cracker. Because you get a crown. You get a joke.

And you get a gift. That's what you get. You get a crown, a joke, and a gift. And as I said, I want us to think about, I'll put that there. I hope it doesn't fall. As I said, when, I want us to think about Jesus and how important Jesus is.

And I want us to use this Christmas cracker. So we have to pull our Christmas cracker. Kara's done it already. So pull it. Everybody. Oh. It's really loud. And the first thing you find.

Oh, they're all pulling them. Now don't worry about the mess. David will pick it all up. So the first thing you get inside a Christmas cracker is a.

[6 : 34] What is it? A crown. Now, boys and girls. Who wears crowns? Do builders wear a crown? No.

No. They wear helmets. They wear helmets. That's right. Does a chef wear a crown? No. No. Does a nurse wear a crown?

No. No. Does a footballer wear a crown? No. No. So who wears a crown? A. A king or a.

Queen. Yeah. A king or a queen. And that's what our queen wears. Our queen wears a crown. She wears a crown on her head because she's really, really important. Isn't she?

And the queen, she sits upon her throne and she rules and she reigns. The queen is very, very important. But as I said, I want us to think about how important Jesus is.

[7 : 29] And you know, Jesus wears a crown because Jesus is king. Jesus is king. And what's amazing is that Jesus has always been a king. He's always been a king.

There has never been a time when Jesus was not a king. Even before you were born, Jesus was a king. Even before your mummy and daddy were born, Jesus was king.

Even before your granny and shenna were born, Jesus was king. And I know that was a long time ago. But Jesus was king then. Even back then, Jesus was king. In fact, Jesus was king before the world was created.

Do you know that? Jesus was a king before God created the world. So Jesus has always been king. And he's the king of kings. He has created everything.

And he has created everyone. And you know, that's why Jesus loves us so much. Because he created us. Jesus created us. But Jesus not only created us, he also knows everything about us.

[8 : 33] Do you know that? Jesus knows your name. He knows if you're called Cara or Lauren or Ewan or Ross or Jonathan or Kerry.

He knows your name. He knows, Jesus knows everything about you. He knows where you live. He knows what school you go to. He knows how old you are. Jesus knows everything about you.

Jesus even knows if you love him or not. But the wonderful thing about it is that Jesus loves you.

And you know, that's what we often sing at the school, isn't it? We always sing that song, don't we?

Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so. And that's what the Bible tells us. The Bible tells us that Jesus loves us so much that he left his crown in glory to come to the cradle in Bethlehem.

Jesus left the crown in glory to come to the cradle in Bethlehem. And that's what we were reading about in the Bible. That when Jesus was born, Jesus wasn't born with a crown on his head like this

one.

[9 : 35] No, Jesus was born as a little baby. A little baby. And I'm sure we've all seen little babies before. Cara and Lauren, they have a little baby, don't they? And there's a little baby who was running around here a wee minute ago.

Little Archie. We've seen lots of little babies before, haven't we? And we see that little babies, they're helpless, aren't they? They can't feed themselves. They can't clothe themselves. They can't look after themselves. They're completely helpless. And you know, that's what King Jesus was like. Jesus left the crown of glory. And he became a helpless little baby in Bethlehem. Jesus was born as a little baby in a stable. Who was completely dependent on his mummy, Mary. But boys and girls, why was Jesus born?

Why did Jesus come into the world? Well, the Bible tells us, that's what we read earlier on. They were to call his name Jesus. Because he shall save his people from their sins.

[10 : 39] So Jesus came into the world to save sinners. But Jesus didn't save sinners at the cradle, did he? Did Jesus save sinners at the cradle? When he was in Bethlehem as a baby?

No. Jesus saved sinners at the cross, wasn't it? So Jesus, he went from the crown of glory to the cradle in Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary.

So King Jesus went from the crown to the cradle to the cross. From the crown to the cradle to the cross. And that's what our Christmas cracker, that's what it tells us.

Because when we pull out the next thing we find in a Christmas cracker, what do you get? A joke. A joke. You get a joke inside your Christmas cracker.

So whenever you pull your Christmas cracker, you get, you always get a crown. A crown like this. And then you get a joke. And my joke, it says, why did the gingerbread man go to the doctors?

[11 : 35] Because he felt crummy. You know, Christmas cracker jokes are not, they're not very funny, are they? They're not very good jokes. But maybe you tell good jokes.

Maybe you tell really good jokes. The boys at our house, they're always trying to tell good jokes. They're always saying, knock, knock. And I have to say, who's there? And then they tell me something. And then they're rolling around on the ground laughing.

And maybe you do that too. Maybe you tell your friends or your mummy or your daddy a joke. But you know, as I said, I want us to think about Jesus and how important Jesus is by using this Christmas cracker.

And we've seen the crown. Jesus is king. But then Jesus, he went from the crown of glory to the cradle in Bethlehem where he was born. Then he went all the way to the cross of Calvary.

And when Jesus came to the cross of Calvary, you know, they didn't tell jokes to Jesus. They mocked him. They mocked Jesus. There was Roman soldiers.

[12 : 35] There were chief priests. There were scribes. And they were horrible to Jesus. It wasn't that they told bad jokes. But they were really, really bad to Jesus.

And you know, they called Jesus' names. They spat on Jesus. They hit Jesus. They punched Jesus. They kicked Jesus. They beat Jesus up. They mocked him.

They mocked Jesus. Do you know, they were just like big bullies. We don't like bullies, do we? And you know, boys and girls, bullies are not nice people at all. And it's not nice to mock people.

It's not nice to call people names. It's not nice to punch or to kick or to pull people's hair or to do bad things like that. Do you know why? Remember, we were talking about it in the school before. What Jesus says.

Jesus says, love one another as I have loved you. That's what Jesus says. Love one another as I have loved you.

[13 : 32] So we're to love one another. We're to love our friends. We're to love our family. Our brothers and our sisters. Even though they might drive us crazy. We're to love them. And we're to love even our neighbors.

And we're to love our teachers. We're to love one another as much as Jesus loves us. And how much does Jesus love us? How much does Jesus love us?

Well, Jesus loves us so much that he was willing to go from the crown of glory to the cradle in Bethlehem, to the cross of Calvary. And Jesus says, greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

And so Jesus says that he loves you. And you are his friend. And he loves you so much that he was mocked. He was spat upon. He was nailed to a cross. All so that your sins could be forgiven.

And that's the promise that the Bible gives to us. That when we confess our sins, when we say sorry for our sins, God will forgive us and cleanse us. Because the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

[14 : 40] And so by using this Christmas cracker, we're thinking about how important Jesus is. And we've seen the crown. What is the crown? Jesus is a king.

Jesus is a king. And Jesus went from the crown of glory to the cradle in Bethlehem to the cross of Calvary. And with a joke in the Christmas cracker, we remember that when Jesus came to the cross, he was mocked.

Yeah, he was mocked. They didn't tell bad jokes. They mocked Jesus. They hated Jesus. They crucified him. But you know, Jesus laid down his life. He laid down his life in order that our sins could be forgiven.

And that we could receive a gift. A gift. And that's what our Christmas cracker tells us. That the last thing we pull out of our Christmas cracker, if you can find it, it's a gift.

A gift. So whenever you pull the Christmas cracker, you get a crown. You get a joke. And you get a gift. And in this little cracker, it's only a wee cracker.

[15 : 49] And you get a wee sticker. That you can stick somewhere. Don't stick it on the pews. David will have to scrape it off. But you know, sometimes you get toys. Don't stick it on my face, no.

But sometimes you can get toys inside your crackers. I mean, I wonder what you get inside this wee wee big one. There's lots inside. Shall we pull it? Yeah. Oh, so you are listening.

That's good. That's good. It's good to know you're listening. It's good to know you're listening. So inside the cracker, you get a crown, a joke, and a gift. And we're thinking about how important Jesus is.

Because the crown reminds us that Jesus is king. The joke reminds us that Jesus was mocked.

And the gift should remind us that Jesus came into the world to give us the gift of eternal life.

And you know, eternal life is a gift. It's a wonderful gift. And do you know how much eternal life...

Oh, wow. Do you know how much eternal life costs? It's free.

[16 : 50] It's free. Now, boys and girls, how many sleeps are until Christmas? Two. Yeah, okay. You're definitely listening. There's two sleeps. And so on Tuesday morning, Christmas morning, you'll have lots of presents.

And they're all wrapped. And you've... Well, I'm sure you've been given presents. Or you will be given presents by your mummy and daddy. Maybe granny and shenner. Maybe auntie and uncle. All these different people.

Maybe neighbours and friends. They're giving you presents. And I'm sure you've got lots of presents that are sitting under your Christmas tree. Or they will be there soon. But did you have to pay for any of them?

Did you pay for any of your gifts? Did you? Did you have to pay mummy and daddy for your presents? No. No. Did you have to pay your granny and shenner for presents? No.

Did you have to pay your aunties and uncles for presents? No. Yes, you did. Who said that? So do you have to pay?

[17 : 50] You don't have to pay for them, do you? They're all free, aren't they? They're all free. You receive your Christmas presents for free. And they're given to you as a gift because these people love you.

That's why, isn't it? They give you the gift because they love you. They're lovingly and freely given to you. And you know, that's what the Bible says about the gift that Jesus gives to us.

Jesus offers us the gift of eternal life. And he says to us, it's a free gift because Jesus has paid for it. Jesus paid the gift of eternal life when he died on the cross and when he rose again on the third day.

So we don't have to pay for the gift of eternal life. We can't work for it. We will never be good enough for it. But the gift of eternal life, it's lovingly and freely offered to us.

All we have to do is just accept the gift. Accept it. And accept this wonderful gift of forgiveness and the promise of eternal life by trusting in Jesus with all our heart.

[18 : 58] And you know, boys and girls, that's all we have to do. All we have to do is ask Jesus to forgive us our sins. To cleanse us from our sins. To wash us, to make us white as snow.

Remember we were talking about that on Tuesday when you were all here with the school. Talking about Jesus washing us as white as snow. And so all we have to do is ask and we will receive.

That's what the promise of the Bible is. Ask and you shall receive. Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened to you. And that's what Jesus promises us.

If we ask for the gift of eternal life. He promises to give it to us. And is that not the best news ever? Is it not the best news ever? And I'm sure you all know John 3.16.

Yeah. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. He gifted to us his only begotten son. That whosoever. Who is whosoever?

[19 : 58] Who is whosoever? Any? Anyone. Isn't it? Anyone. So whosoever believes in Jesus will not perish. But have eternal life.

And you know isn't it amazing what you can learn from a Christmas cracker? Isn't it? Because inside a Christmas cracker. Which you'll probably pull on Christmas day. When you're sitting down having your Christmas dinner.

And you'll see that there's a crown. You'll see that there's a joke. And you'll see that there's. Well there might be a better gift than this one. But there'll be a gift in it.

And hopefully. By seeing the crown and the joke and the gift. You'll remember how important Jesus is. And how important it is to follow Jesus. Because the crown reminds us that Jesus is.

A king. Yeah well done. And the joke reminds us that Jesus was. Mocked. Yeah. He was mocked. And then crucified. And when Jesus was crucified.

[21 : 02] He gives to us a gift. Gift. A gift of what? Eternal life. So that's amazing isn't it? It's amazing what you can learn from a cracker.

That we can have the promise of Jesus. Given to us. So I hope you'll remember this. When you pull your crackers on Christmas day. And I hope you have a lovely Christmas. And you have lots of fun. But behave. Remember to behave. Okay. So thank you so much for listening. You did very very well. So we're going to say a wee short prayer. Okay. Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father. Heavenly Father. We give thanks for that wonderful reminder. That Jesus is king. That he is king over our lives. That he has always been king.

And that he will be king to the end of time. And we pray Lord that we would see that. Even though he was king. And even though he was rich. Yet for our sakes he became poor.

[21 : 59] Lord. That we through his poverty. Might become rich. We thank thee Lord that he was mocked. That he was crucified. That we might have life. And have it abundantly.

Help us Lord to trust. And to receive this precious gift. Of eternal life. To know that it is freely given. And freely received. Lord bless us together.

Bless the children we pray. Protect them. Guard their hearts and their minds. Keep the evil one from them. We know Lord that he goes around. Like a roaring lion. But we plead with thee.

That thou Lord would escape them. Bless us as homes and as families. As loved ones. Keep us we ask. Go before us. And do us good. For Jesus sake.

Amen. So we're going to bring our service. To a conclusion. By singing in Psalm 23. Psalm 23. Psalm 23.

[22 : 56] It's in the Scottish Psalter. Page 229. Psalm 23.

This is the shepherd's psalm. And many of you in Sunday school. Have been learning this psalm. Those who are in Margaret Jones class. You've been learning this. So you should be singing it really, really loudly.

That we hear you. It's a wonderful psalm. Psalm 23. The Lord's my shepherd. I'll not want. He makes me down to lie. In pastures green he leadeth me.

The quiet waters by. And we'll sing on to the end of the psalm. Where it says. Goodness and mercy all my life. Shall surely follow me. And in God's house forevermore. My dwelling place.

Shall be. So the whole psalm. To God's praise. The Lord's my shepherd.

[23 : 58] I'll not want. He makes me down to lie.

In pastures green. He leadeth me.

The quiet waters by. My soul he doth restore again.

And me to what doth make. Within the path of righteousness.

He'll draw his own in sight.

[25 : 09] Though I walk in death's dark veil.

Yet will I fear none ill. For thou art with me.

And thy road. And stop me comfort still.

My temple thou hast furnished. In presence of my foes.

My head. My head. My head. Thou dost. With oil anoint.
[26 : 18] And my cup overflows. Goodness and mercy.

All my life. Shall surely follow me.

And in God's house. Forevermore. My dwelling place.

Shall be. Now I remind you there's tea and coffee after the service. So it's in the hall just to your right. As you're leaving. So please do stay behind if you can.

I will just give thanks for the tea. And conclude. Lord we give thanks to thee. That every good and perfect gift. Is from above. That thou art the God who provides for us.

[27 : 25] Not only for our bodily needs. But thou art the God who has provided for our spiritual needs. And we thank thee Lord for the greatest gift. That is thy son Jesus. Help us to trust him.

Help us to follow him. Help us to know that in him. There is grace, mercy and peace. And that through him. It is from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. That we receive every blessing.

Go with us then Lord and to this day. Keep us we ask. And go before us. For Jesus sake. Amen.