

A Christmas Cracker

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo M Campbell

[0 : 00] Well, if we could take our Bibles, and I just want to read one verse.

Hold the cracker, Annie. Keep holding the cracker. It's okay. We'll come to that soon. But read, we want to read one verse, Matthew chapter 1, and we're going to read verse 21.

Matthew chapter 1 and verse 21, where it says there, She that is Mary will bear a son, and you shall call his name, what was his name?

Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. So Mary will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.

Well, good morning, boys and girls. Good morning. Good morning. Oh, that's very poor. For the amount of children that are here, that was very poor. So, good morning, boys and girls.

[1 : 02] Good morning. Thank you. You're all awake? Yes. All well? Yes. Yes, all well. You all have a good week in school?

Yes. And scholarly? Yes. All looking forward to another day in school tomorrow? No. No. You're not in school, Ross. Why are you not in school tomorrow?

Yes, it's Christmas. Oh, is it? So, what does that mean? If Christmas Day is tomorrow, how many sleeps? One. One more sleep until Christmas.

Do you get up early on a Christmas morning? Yes. Do you? Yes. What time do you get up? What time do you get up? One more sleep. No, you don't, Finley. I hope you're all staying in bed until about 8 o'clock tomorrow, at least.

8 o'clock. Is that a good time for the parents? Yes, Ross? 8 o'clock tomorrow. Do you agree? Yes. Some of you might stay in bed until lunchtime, will you?

[2 : 08] So, you're all excited for Christmas? No. So, nobody's excited for Christmas? No. I don't hear you.

Are you all excited for Christmas? Yes. Okay. Well, I'm really excited. You know why I'm really excited? Because I can't wait to see what you got me. Did you get me a present?

No. Did you get me a card? Not even a card. I mean, it's not hard to make a card. You could have made it. Oh, well, we'll just have to wait for next year. But, you know, at this time of year, as you know, there's lots going on at this time of year.

There's so much excitement around Christmas, and it's good to be excited. Great to be excited. But it's always good for us to remember who it's all about. Because who is it all about? It's all about Jesus.

Okay? Always remember that. It's all about Jesus. But, you know, we not only think about Jesus on Christmas Eve, like today. We also think about Jesus every week when we come to church, don't we?

[3 : 14] And what do we think about today? So, every time we do the kids' talk, what do we think about? Say it again. Things we see at home that remind us about Jesus.

That's right, Ross. Things we see at home that remind us about Jesus. That's what we think about every week when we do our kids' talk. Things we see at home that remind us about Jesus.

And I want to remind you about Jesus because, as you know, I think Jesus is the most important person in all the world. Now, I tested your memory last week and maybe the week before.

So, how good is your memory this week? Do you remember who I have had with me over the past few weeks? Anybody other than Finley?

Snowy the Snowman. Thank you. Thank you, Joshua James. That's so good. Snowy the Snowman. So, he came with me again today.

[4 : 11] This is Snowy the Snowman. If you haven't met him yet, this is Snowy the Snowman. He has been with me all through December. And Snowy the Snowman, he'll be going back into his box

soon.

Very sad. He's going back into his box soon. So, I thought, well, I'll take him with me one more time. But why did I take Snowy the Snowman? Because he reminds us about. And why?

What do we talk about with Snowy the Snowman? He's got a what color of hat? And a? Gloves are red and? And a scarf is? And it's not because he supports Aberdeen.

Why is it? Ross, tell us. The blood of? Cleanses us from all? Sin. Well done.

So, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. So, that's why we take Snowy the Snowman with us. Because he reminds us about Jesus. So, your memories are really good. Okay. Jesus.

[5 : 08] I have to remember all your names. Shoros. Yes, that's. It's all about Jesus. Okay. So, you remember last week we also had a friend for Snowy the Snowman. Do you remember who that was?

Alan the Alligator. Yeah. Good job. Alan the Alligator. He was here last week. And why did we have Alan the Alligator? Is anybody? Alligator.

Alligator, Ava. Yes, Alligator. Why do we have Alan the Alligator? Remind us about the Christmas what? Christmas dragon. Well done. The Christmas dragon.

Does anybody know who the Christmas dragon is? Oh. Did the adults not tell you? When they went home last week, that was their only job, was to tell you who the Christmas dragon was.

The Christmas dragon, believe it or not, is the devil. And it was the devil because the devil did not want Jesus to be born. And that's what we were looking at last week.

[6 : 08] Satan knew that Jesus would be the Savior of the world. And he didn't want Jesus to be born. Because as we read, Jesus came into the world to save us from our sins.

Okay, boys and girls. So we've seen, who's this? And we've seen Alan the Alligator. Okay. You were also given something on the way into church this morning.

What were you given? Do you all get a cracker? Not all of you got a cracker. You know this? I had loads of crackers. I thought I had more than enough. Does anybody want to share their cracker?

No? So everybody has one. Okay. So those of you who don't have a cracker, you just have to imagine it. And then go home and do it again. Okay?

You've seen one of these before though. You've all seen a cracker before. What do you do with them? Don't pull it yet. Okay? Well this morning I want to talk about, this is something we see at home that will remind us about Jesus.

[7 : 10] Yeah? That's what we're doing. Things we see at home that remind us about Jesus. Now, before we pull our Christmas crackers, how long do you think Christmas crackers have been around for?

Any guesses? 200? That's a good guess. Any advances on 200 or anything lower than 200? 100? Katie? Okay. Wee but higher than 100. Any advances on that? 160 million. 164? Wee but higher than that. Sorry? 3 million. No, not 3 million.

Too long. 100 and... 170 years. That's how long they've been around for.

It's a long time. Christmas crackers, they were first invented by a man called Tom Smith. What was his name? He was called Tom Smith. And you know, boys and girls, Tom Smith had a great job.

[8 : 10] Imagine Tom Smith's job. Tom Smith made sweeties. Wouldn't that be the best job in the world? Making sweeties. You could just eat as many sweeties as you wanted all day long.

Great job. But this man, Tom Smith, he invented the Christmas cracker 170 years ago because he took a sweetie. I suppose I've actually got one in my pocket, I think. Oh, yeah, I do. He took a sweetie and he wrapped it up in paper.

But inside the sweetie, he put a riddle. So like a wee story. Are you coming up, Annabelle? Yes. You've always wanted somebody in the pulpit with me.

So he put a riddle inside the sweetie. But what happened was they didn't sell very well. Nobody bought them. Nobody wanted them. Even though they had a cool riddle inside them.

But one night, Tom Smith, he was sitting in front of his fire and he had a big log fire. You ever seen a log fire? Yeah. And what happens when there's a log fire and there's wood burning?

[9 : 13] It makes all these sparks and bang noises. And he thought to himself, that would be great to put it inside, to wrap it inside, a sweetie inside some paper.

And when you pull it, it makes a big bang noise. And that's where the idea of the Christmas cracker came from. Came from a man. What was his name? Tom Smith.

Now, as you know, Christmas crackers, they come in all different shapes and colors and sizes. What color is our Christmas cracker? Red.

And why do you think I chose red ones? Of course, the blood of Jesus. Why else would I choose red ones? And look what's on the inside of it. What color's on the inside?

White. Isn't that amazing? So the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all? It makes us as white as?

Snow. So already our Christmas cracker is telling us all about who?

[10:14] All about Jesus. And that's because when we trust in Jesus and ask Jesus to forgive us, the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Makes us as white as?

What's the color of snow? White as snow. Yeah? Okay. Here's the big moment. Turn to the person beside you and pull the cracker.

Okay? Okay? I have to pull it on my own. Oh, mine didn't even make a noise. Okay?

Are you all pulled? Did you pull them all? Shh, shh, shh, shh, shh. Good job, good job. Okay?

You ready? So inside a Christmas cracker, you always get three things, don't you? Three things inside a Christmas cracker. Can you tell me them?

[11:13] Not specific, more specific than a hat. It's actually a? A crown. What else do you get? A joke. A joke. And then you get a? A?

Toy. A gift. We'll call it a gift, yeah? Not always a toy. So you get a crown, a joke, and a gift. So let's take out our crown and think about that for a moment, okay? So take out your crown.

Show me your crown, if you can get one. Open it out, if you can, without ripping it. Put it on your head. Okay?

You with me? You all got a crown on? You ready? I should have got enough for every adult.

I know you feel you're missing out right now. You're so jealous, aren't you, of the children? Okay.

So put it on.

[12:16] Now apart from you, who's wearing your crown right now, who else wears a crown? Who else wears a crown? A king, okay.

Or a queen. What's our king called? Cameron, shout. Our king is God, that's right. But who is our king over the United Kingdom?

What's his name? Charles, that's right. And what does Charles sit on? What do we call the seat that Charles sits on? A throne. He sits on a throne. So he rules and he reigns over our nation.

And he's a king. And of course, as Cameron was saying, the king should remind us about our greater king, who is God. Jesus is king. And Jesus is king.

In fact, Jesus is the greatest king. He is, as the Bible says, he is the king of kings. And what's amazing about Jesus is that Jesus has always been king.

[13:13] There has never been a time when Jesus was not king. Even before you were born, Jesus was what? King. Before your mom or your dad or your granny or your shenna was born, Jesus was king.

In fact, Jesus was king before the world was even created. That's why King Jesus, he made the world. He made everyone in the world.

And that's why King Jesus, he loves us so much because he created us. He made us. But King Jesus, he not only created us.

The only amazing thing is King Jesus knows everything about us. So what do you think King Jesus knows about you? Do you think he knows your name? Do you think he knows how old you are? Do you think he knows where you live? Do you think he knows what school you go to? Do you think he knows what school you go to? Do you think he knows what school you go to? So King Jesus knows absolutely everything about you. He even knows, he knows this, if you love him or not.

[14:18] King Jesus knows that too. But the wonderful thing is King Jesus loves you. King Jesus loves you. And you know, boys and girls, those of you who are in Scotland, Hampshire, you remember I have a favorite song that we sing at every school assembly.

What's my favorite song that we sing at every school assembly? Jesus loves me. And how does it go?

Do you remember? 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 me, this I know, for the Bible tells me.

And the Bible tells us that King Jesus loves us so much that he humbled himself from his crown and glory all the way down to the cradle in Bethlehem.

All the way down to the cradle in Bethlehem. And that's what we're reading about in the Bible in Matthew chapter 1, that when King Jesus was born, he wasn't born with a crown upon his head, was he? No.

[15:24] Where was Jesus born? In Bethlehem. And was Jesus born as a man or was he born as a tiny little baby? A tiny little baby.

And can you imagine that? Can you imagine that? King Jesus left his crown and glory and humbled himself all the way down to the cradle, to the cot of Bethlehem.

It's the greatest miracle. King Jesus was born as a helpless baby in a stable in Bethlehem. And he was completely dependent upon his mummy, upon Mary.

That was his mother's name. But boys and girls, why was Jesus born? To save his people from our sins.

So Jesus came into the world. As we read there in Matthew chapter 1, they called his name. What did they call his name? What did they call his name? Jesus. Jesus.

[16:22] Because he shall save his people from their sins. So King Jesus, he came into the world to save sinners. But of course, King Jesus didn't save sinners by going to the cradle in Bethlehem.

How did King Jesus save sinners? Where did he have to go? Where did King Jesus go? Not as a baby, but as a man. Where did he go? To the cross.

Didn't he? Jesus came from his crown and glory down to the cradle in Bethlehem. But he loved us so, so, so much that he went all the way to the cross of Calvary.

So King Jesus went from the crown to the cradle all the way down to the cross. From the crown to the cradle to the cross. And that's why our Christmas cracker is so helpful.

Because the next thing we find inside a Christmas cracker is what? A joke. Find a joke. So, pull out your joke. If you can find your joke.

[17:28] So inside a Christmas cracker, what do you get first? Not a hat. It's a, what is it? A crown.

Reminds us about who? Jesus. Jesus. Right. Then we get, what do we get? A joke. Okay. Do you like jokes? I always love a good joke.

My Christmas cracker joke says, what's as big as a Christmas tree, but is lighter than a feather?

What's as big as a Christmas tree, but is lighter than a feather?

It's shadow. So, some Christmas cracker jokes, they're not very funny, are they? I read a few other Christmas cracker jokes. Do you want to hear them? Okay.

What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations? Tinselitis. Why couldn't the skeleton go to the Christmas party?

[18:33] He had nobody to go with. What falls at the North Pole and never gets hurt? Snow. Well done. Snow. Good answer.

So, they're not the best jokes, and I'm sure you can tell better jokes, but in every Christmas cracker, you get a, you get a joke. And as I said, this is something that reminds us about Jesus, because the crown reminds us about, what is it?

And Jesus is a? A king. Come on, guys. Wake up. I know it's nearly Christmas, but wake up. Jesus is a? Thank you. Right.

Okay. And he humbled himself from the crown of glory down to the cradle in Bethlehem, all the way down to where? Where did Jesus die? The cross, Cameron.

Right? You're awake today. But when Jesus went to the cross, they didn't tell jokes. What did they do to Jesus? Before they crucified him, they mocked him.

[19:37] There was Roman soldiers there. There were chief priests there. There were scribes there. There was people there. And they were all mocking Jesus. And they mocked Jesus by calling him names.

They spat on Jesus. They punched Jesus. They hit Jesus. They kicked him. They beat Jesus. They mocked Jesus. And you know, they were just like big bullies.

They were just like big bullies. And as you know, boys and girls, bullies aren't nice, are they? Are bullies nice people? No. Bullies are not nice because they mock people and they call people names and they kick and they punch and they hurt people.

And that's why Jesus says in the Bible, you know, remember what Jesus says in the Bible time and time again. He says, love one another as I have loved you. So when you're fighting with your brothers or your sisters or your friends in school or whatever, remember what Jesus says.

Love one another as I have loved you. We're to love one another. We're to love our family. We're to love our friends. We're to love our neighbors. We're to love our teachers.

[20 : 45] We're to love one another as much as Jesus loves us. And how much does Jesus love us? There's the question. How much does Jesus love us?

So much that he was willing to go all the way to the cross to take away our sin. That's how much Jesus loves us.

Jesus said, greater love has no one than this that a man lay down his life for his friends. And you are my friends if you do whatsoever I command you.

So when King Jesus laid down his life on the cross for us, he gave to us our next thing that we find inside the Christmas cracker. He gave to us a present.

What was the word we used? A gift. That's the third thing we see. Okay? So what do we see? First of all, we see a not a hat. It's a crown.

[21 : 46] Crown. And who is what is it? Who wears a crown? Jesus. Because he's a king. The next thing we see is a which reminds us about what happened to Jesus.

He was he was mocked and bullied. Yes? Bullied. That's a good answer. And the last thing we see in a Christmas cracker is a a gift.

A gift. What's your gift? Show me. Is this what I got? If I put this on I'll look like my dad. Or murder burns.

We could be I could be his twin. So we all get a gift inside, don't we? Yeah? What did you get? Did you get anything nice? Anything good?

Key rings? Or little things? Maybe things you don't even know what they are. But inside every Christmas cracker you get a what do you get? A gift.

[22 : 51] And as we said a Christmas cracker it's something that we see at home that reminds us about who? Jesus. The crown reminds us that what? Jesus is king.

The joke reminds us that Jesus was mocked. I've lost my joke. I don't know where it was. Oh there it is. Jesus was mocked and the gift reminds us about what? What do you think the gift reminds us about?

Jesus died on the cross to give to us the gift of eternal life. That's what the gift is all about. Jesus died on the cross to give to us the gift of eternal life.

And how much does this gift cost? It's free. It's a free gift. The free gift of God is eternal life.

Now boys and girls I want to ask you a question. So are you listening? Are you listening really carefully? We're listening really really carefully right? I want to ask you do you have presents under your tree right now?

[23 : 54] Do you? How come? So you have nicely wrapped presents under your tree right now. Not really Katie. Okay.

Okay. But they'll be there by tomorrow. Yeah? Now all these presents that you have been given that are under your tree did you pay for them? No.

Did you have to work for them? No. Did you have to earn them? Of course you didn't. So all of these presents that are under your tree are going to be under your tree they've been given to you for how much?

Free. Given to you for free. That's terrible isn't it? And tomorrow morning you can open them can't you? Are you allowed to open them tomorrow? Or do you have to wait till after lunch?

No. After 8 o'clock Ross after 8 o'clock. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. So why are you receiving these gifts? Why are you going to get them? Is it because you're a perfect person?

[24 : 59] Is it because you're a good person? Is it because you've never done anything wrong? Why are you receiving them? Why are these gifts all being given to you by different people?

Maybe mum or dad or grannies and shenners and aunties and uncles. Why do they give you all these gifts? Why do they give them to you? Can I tell you why?

Because they love you. That's why they give you all these gifts because they love you. They give you all these gifts for free because they love you.

Every Christmas present that has been given and gifted to you by someone whoever it is has been given and gifted to you because they love you. And you know that's what the Bible says about the greatest gift that is Jesus.

Jesus is the greatest gift because Jesus lovingly holds out to us the gift of eternal life. And how much is the gift of eternal life?

[26 : 05] It's like the Christmas presents. How much is it? Free. It's a free gift. Why? Who paid for it? No. Who paid for the gift of eternal life?

Jesus paid for it. How did Jesus pay for it? He died on the cross. And so we don't have to pay for the gift of eternal life.

We don't have to pay for it at all. We can't work for it. We can't earn it. We will never be good enough to receive it. And this gift of eternal life is freely and lovingly given to us.

So how do we receive it? See all your Christmas presents that you're getting tomorrow. How did those who are giving you Christmas presents, how did they know what to get you?

Is that what happens in our house? Because they give them because they love you. But why are they giving those specific ones?

[27 : 10] Because you ask for them. You asked for them, didn't you? So when you open your present tomorrow, it's something you've asked for, isn't it?

And that's what the Bible says to us. We are able to receive this full and free gift of eternal life by simply asking. Asking Jesus.

Asking Jesus to forgive us our sin, to cleanse us, to make us white as snow, to wash us in his blood and to make us his. And all we have to do is ask King Jesus.

All we have to do is ask him for this free gift of eternal life. Because the Bible promises to us, ask and you shall receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you.

Isn't that the best news ever? that God so loved the world that he gave his only son, he gifted to us his only son, so that whosoever believes in him, whoever trusts in him, will not perish but have eternal life.

[28 : 19] You know, boys and girls, it's amazing what you find inside a Christmas cracker, isn't it? What do you find inside a Christmas cracker? What do you find reminds us about Jesus?

Who is? He's king. What else does it remind us about? There's a joke, reminds us what happened to Jesus. He was mocked for our sin.

And Jesus, he gives to us what? What does he give to us? A gift of eternal life when we come to, what do we have to do to get it? Ask.

We just have to ask. Ask and you shall receive. That's what Jesus says. Ask and you shall receive. Do you know, what better gift to receive at Christmas than the gift of eternal life by trusting in Jesus?

Well, boys and girls, I hope you have a lovely Christmas. I hope you all enjoy your gifts. You all seem very excited. And I hope, most importantly, I hope you ask for the greatest gift.

[29 : 25] That is eternal life. Through who? Through who? Jesus. You are listening. Okay. So we're going to clasp our hands, we're going to close our eyes, and we're going to say the Lord's Prayer.

I've been practicing all week, so I don't get it wrong. So we'll clasp our hands, we'll close our eyes, and we'll say the Lord's Prayer together, okay? Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Well, thank you, boys and girls. Thank you for listening. You're very, very good at listening. So you'll remember that when you're sitting tomorrow morning, or tomorrow afternoon, having your lunch, and you pull your Christmas cracker, you'll remember all these things, will you?

[30 : 30] The crown, and the joke, and the gift, and it'll all point you to, who does it point you to? Jesus. So we're going to sing in conclusion, we're going to sing this morning in Psalm 23.

Psalm 23, in the Scottish Psalter, page 229. Psalm 23. We're singing the whole psalm.

This is the shepherd psalm. Wonderful psalm that reminds us that the Lord is our shepherd, that we need to trust him. And so just to remind you, there's tea and coffee after the service.

Please stay behind if you can. It'd be lovely to see you and spend time together. So Psalm 23, page 229 in the Blue Psalm book. We're going to sing the whole psalm.

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. We'll sing the whole psalm. We'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

[31 : 36] God's praise. verse 1. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not walk.

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 walk.
He doth make within the path of righteousness.
He for his own name's sake.

[32 : 58] Yea, though I walk in death's dark will, Yet will I fear none ill, For thou art with me on thy road, And stop me comfort still.

My table thou hast furnished, In presence of my foes, My head thou dost, With oil anoint, And my cup overflows, Goodness and mercy all my life, Shall surely follow me,
And in God's heart forevermore, My dwelling place shall be.

Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with you all, Now and forevermore. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[35 : 20] Amen. Amen. Amen.