

The Candy Cane

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[0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, just for a wee while, if we could turn back to that passage that we read in the Bible, Matthew chapter 1. So, Matthew chapter 1, and I want us to read again just a couple of verses there. So, Matthew chapter 1 at verse 20, what it says there, but as Joseph considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. And then verse 21, she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. And particularly that verse there, verse 21, she 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, Shawlis. Good, good, good. You're all awake? Yeah. Some are just nodding. So, some of you are... Good morning, Ava. Are you awake? Good.

Are you all well? All well, good. Did you all have a good week in school or scholare? Yeah. Did you see them all in... All your friends were there in scholare? Whether that's good, Ava. Okay.

So, you're all looking forward to scholare tomorrow? Are you? No! No! Any... It's not Christmas holiday! Oh, I see. So, there's no school tomorrow?

No! Is there not? How not? Oh, surely you can go to school tomorrow. Don't start an argument in church whether there's school or not, right?

[2 : 0 0] No! So, are you on holiday? Yes! Oh, you're on holiday. Okay. Why are you on holiday? It's what? Oh, the Christmas holidays.

All right, okay. Is it Christmas already? Is it Christmas today? Not today, okay. Three days, Shores.

Three. You're not excited at all, are you? Hands up if you're excited. You're not really, are you?

Are you excited, Joshua James? Are you? Cool. So, what happens on Christmas morning? Do you get up really early? No? So, it's 10 o'clock you get up, is it?

No, Archie. What time do you get up? 7 o'clock. Anybody else get up earlier than 7? 8 o'clock, Eva. Okay, anybody earlier? 9 o'clock.

[3 : 0 4] Well, you guys are good at staying in bed. I remember when I was your age, I think I used to get up at 5 in the morning. Imagine that, running down the stair.

So, you're all excited for Christmas, yeah? Yeah. No. By the way, you're not allowed to get up at 5 in the morning. Okay? Shouldn't have said that. But you're all excited, yeah? Really excited. Yeah?

Yeah? Well, I can't wait to see what you got me. Did you get me a present? No? Oh, did you? Did you? That's good.

Okay. Did you get me a present, too? Yeah. Good man. Well, as you know, this time of year, there's lots going on, isn't there? It's so exciting.

Really, really exciting Christmas time, isn't it? And there's so much excitement about Christmas, and it's good to be excited. But it's also good, as I always say, it's always good to remember who it's all about.

[4 : 03] Now, this is always the dangerous question. Who is Christmas all about? Right. Okay. You're on the right wavelength. That's good. So, Christmas is all about who? Right.

Okay. Right. Good, good, good. So, but we not only think about Jesus at Christmastime, do we? We think about Jesus every single day.

Okay. And in church every single week? Every single week? What is it, Ava? We see it at home. So, what are we going to think about today?

See, we do it every other week. Ross, tell me. Good. Okay. So, we're all on form today. Things we see at home that remind us about Jesus.

Things we see at home that remind us about Jesus. Because, well, this is what we think about every week. Because Jesus is the most important person in all the world.

[5 : 00] The most important person in all the world. And this morning, we're going to be thinking about Jesus using something I hope you picked up at the door. I'm sure you've seen these before.

Yeah, you're not meant to be eating them yet. Now, don't make a mess. The church office will be wild with you. If you make a mess. So, you picked up your...

He won't really be. Don't worry. So, you picked up your candy cane. Good. Good. Well, that's your Christmas present from me. Okay. So, if you finish it, that's it done. Okay. And if you didn't pick one up, well, hopefully there's still some left over.

There's one left over. So, if you didn't get it, run to the back and get it after the service. But, well, you're not really meant to be eating your candy cane right now. We needed to keep them intact for the whole service.

But, anyway, we're going to use the candy cane to remind you about who? Jesus. And I know some of you have learned this before. We did it a number of years ago. We did it in school.

[6 : 02] But I want to remind you, because I think it's so important to be reminded, especially at this time of year, is to be reminded about Jesus. Because we can often forget Jesus with all our presents and all our Christmas cards.

And all the turkey and all the food, we can forget about Jesus. But Jesus is the most important person in all the world. Now, boys and girls, I worried that you wouldn't be able to see my candy cane if I took it into the pulpit.

Because they're quite small, aren't they? Yeah? So, I took with me a candy cane that's a wee bit bigger than yours. Do you like it? Do you like this one?

Mine's a wee bit bigger than yours, is it? Yeah, it's a wee bit big. Is it a wee bit bigger than yours? It's a balloon, is it? So, my candy cane, you can't eat it.

It's a balloon candy cane, that's right. You can't eat it. It's all plastic. But guess what? I didn't just have one. I got two. So, I beat you.

[7 : 05] I got two candy canes. Yeah. So, I won't encourage fighting with these later on. I can't eat my candy cane. You've already... I've got two, yeah.

But we can... The mealish ones. Yes, that's right. You eat the mealish ones.

I can't eat this. That's right. Well done, Ava. Did you take the wrapper off before you started eating that? That's fine. That's good. Okay. Well, my candy cane, as you know, it's a balloon one.

It's full of what? What's it full of? So, it's not full of the mealish stuff. It's full of sugar. It's not full of sugar. It's full of air. But as you said, we're going to use our candy cane, if you still have it and haven't eaten it yet.

We're going to use our candy cane. Angus, just hang fire. Don't eat it all yet. Right? Hang fire. So, we're going to use our candy cane to remind us about who? Jesus.

[8 : 01] Right. And we're going to be asking the question this morning. Why did Jesus come? Okay? Why did Jesus come? So, Jesus came into the world. That's what we remember at Christmas.

So, why did Jesus come into the world? The first thing I want us to see is that when we turn our candy cane upside down, when we turn the candy cane upside down, what's the shape of the letter that we see?

J. J. J or an L. J or an L. Well, which one do you think we'll go for? J. We'll go for J. Okay. Not the L. We'll go for J.

And J is for? J. Not John. But who said John? Jesus. Jesus. J is for J. Well, it is for John, too. And John's a nice name, too.

But we're using J for, what's his name? J. Jesus. Okay. And so, if we ask our question, why did Jesus come? Why did Jesus come? We're told there in the Bible, in the passage that we read in Matthew chapter 1, the angel spoke to Joseph.

[9 : 03] And he said to Joseph that the baby in Mary's tummy, you shall call his name Jesus. You shall call his name Jesus. But there was a specific reason why he was to be called Jesus.

Do you remember? You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall... Any ideas? What does Jesus do? He saves us from our sins.

Yeah. So, you shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. So, why did Jesus come? Jesus came to save us from our sins. And that's because the name Jesus, the name Jesus means Savior or salvation.

So, what does the name Jesus mean? It means Savior or salvation. Salvation, sure. And salvation means to be saved from our sin.

And the amazing thing is, Jesus is the only one who can save us from our sins. Do you know that? Jesus is the only one who can save us from our sins. In fact, the Bible tells us that the name of Jesus is so special that there's no other name.

[10 : 15] There's no other name that we can call to in order to be saved except the name of Jesus. Which means that we can't ask daddy or mummy to save us from our sins because they can't do it.

They need Jesus too. You can't ask me to save you from your sin or any of the elders to save you from your sin because we can't do it either. We need Jesus too.

I need Jesus. So, who do we ask? What's the name that we need to call on? The name of? Jesus. Yeah, Jesus. Because Jesus is the only one who can save us from our sin.

The Bible says there's no other name under heaven whereby we must be saved other than the name of, what's his name? Jesus. Which means that in order to be saved, you need to ask Jesus, don't you?

You need to ask Jesus to save you. And so, boys and girls, I hope that you will ask Jesus to save you. I hope you'll say to Jesus, Jesus, save me.

[11 : 20] Save me from my sin. Save me from my sin. So, what's the letter? What's the letter? J. You guys should be high as kite if you're eating all that sugar.

What's the letter? J for? J for Jesus. Okay, you should call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins. Okay, we're asking the question, why did Jesus come? And we're using, what is this again?

It's a candy? Candy cane. Okay, what are the two colors in the candy cane? Sorry? Jarak agus gyal.

That's right, Ava. Jarak agus gyal. Can we translate that for those who don't know Gaelic? Jarak is? Jarak is? What color is Jarak?

It's red. Red. Red and what's white? What's gyal? Sorry. White. Okay, so red and white. Jarak agus gyal.

[12 : 20] This is a bilingual service. My first one. So, what does the red color remind us of? Or the Jarak color? What does that remind us of?

Blood. Okay. Jesus came into the world to die on the cross. Yeah. So, why did Jesus come? He was born into the world to die on the cross.

And you know, boys and girls, that's the important part about Christmas, isn't it? The really, really important part. It's important to remember that Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

He was born into the world just like one of us. But Jesus was born sinless. Now, here's a question. Were you born sinless? What?

No. No. Okay, you're very quiet answering that question. So, you weren't born sinless. Our Bible tells us that even little babies were born in sin. But Jesus was born sinless.

[13 : 20] He was born without sin. And he was born to die upon the cross to take away our sin. To take away our sins. But why red?

What does the red speak about? The blood. The blood of Jesus. Yeah. The blood of Jesus. So, the red on the candy cane points us to the blood of Jesus.

And that's why at communion time. Do you remember at communion time when it's so different in the church? And you all come in and you sit really nicely at the side. And you watch what's happening. Do you remember that? And you see all those who love the Lord.

They're sitting at the Lord's table. And they eat. What do they eat? They eat a little bit of bread. They eat the bread. And then they take a little drink of wine. So, what does the bread remind them of?

The broken body of Jesus. And the wine speaks about the? The blood of Jesus. Yeah. The blood of Jesus was shed on the cross to take away our sins.

[14 : 19] Yeah. And what's amazing is that Jesus loves us so much that he was tortured and crucified on a cross to take away our sins.

Isn't that amazing? Because our Bible says that Jesus was wounded for our transgressions. And he was bruised for our iniquities. And boys and girls, if you remember, so some of you were at the school concert on Tuesday night.

Do you remember being there? Were you at the school concert on Tuesday night? Yeah. And you were doing amazing songs. Doing really, really good songs. But then at the very end, you sang two songs.

And what were you singing? You were singing, actually, my favorite hymn. Do you remember it? Do you remember what it was? Jesus loves me. Yeah. Jesus loves me, this I know, for the?

Bible tells me so. So for those of you who weren't there on Tuesday night, you missed out. Because it was actually amazing. As a leaving present, the whole school sang my favorite hymn and then my favorite psalm.

[15 : 27] And they sang my favorite hymn because, as I've always said to the children, I say it every month, I'd be doing a school assembly. We'd always sing. What do we always sing? Jesus, this I know, for the?

The Bible tells me so. And I always said to them as children that if you learn anything from me, please learn that Jesus loves you. This I know, for the Bible tells me so.

It's the most important thing to learn in life. You can learn lots of things, but that's the most important thing to learn in life. To learn that Jesus loves you and that he died on the cross to take away your sin.

And that's what the red of the candy cane reminds us, isn't it? The red of the candy cane reminds us about the blood. What is it? The blood of Jesus. And the Bible promises, our Bible promises to us, that if we confess our sins, if we say sorry to God for our sins, Jesus is faithful and he is righteous that he will cleanse us from all our sins.

He'll forgive us from all our sins. And it's all because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin. So I hope and pray that everyone, we will all confess our sins and we will all be cleansed from our sin through the blood of Jesus.

[16 : 43] Because Jesus is able to cleanse you and wash you as, what's the other color? What's the other color, Eva? Gyal. Yes, that's right.

Cleanse you as white as snow. Okay? Jesus is able to cleanse you whiter than the snow. That's the third thing I want us to think about. So we've seen, what's the first thing we saw?

G is for? Jesus. You'll call his name Jesus for he shall save his people from their sins. Then we saw the red is for blood. Blood.

Jesus is able to cleanse us from our sin. And he cleanses us, what color? White. He washes us white. White. So why did Jesus come?

Jesus came to cleanse us and wash us as white as snow. And you know, boys and girls, if you were at the concert the other night, we were singing on Tuesday night.

[17 : 40] We sang my favorite hymn, Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so. But we also sang my favorite psalm. Do you remember what that one was? Fifty-one. What was it?

Fifty-one. Fifty-one, yeah. And that's the psalm we were singing earlier. We were singing Psalm 51. Because it's a great psalm that reminds us that the blood of Jesus is able to cleanse us whiter than...

Whiter than what? Snow. Whiter than snow. Snow. Now, I'm sure we've all seen snow before. Have you? Yep. You've all seen snow?

Yeah? And I'm sure you're hoping for a white Christmas. Are you? Do you think it'll happen? Probably not. But you know, when we see snow, there's nothing as white as snow.

And there's nothing whiter than snow, is there? Because when snow falls on the ground, it looks so pure. And so white, doesn't it? And so clean. It looks so, so clean.

[18 : 43] And Psalm 51 tells us that Jesus is able to cleanse us and wash us whiter. Whiter than snow. So if you imagine snow. And then the Bible says that Jesus is able to cleanse us as white as snow.

Or whiter than snow. That's very white. That's super white. And the thing the Bible tells us is that we need to be washed. We need to be cleansed. Because our hearts are...

What color do you think our hearts are? If Jesus is able to cleanse us and make us white, what color do you think our heart is? Red. I know red. Red is a good guess.

Any other color? A bit darker than that. The Bible says our hearts are black. Not jarak. Do. Imagine. Do. Imagine that, Ava.

Do. Yeah. Black with sin. Because of all the bad things we do. So do you do bad things? Any confessions do you do bad? Not you, Ava.

[19 : 44] Hmm. Are you sure? Sure. I don't think you do anything bad. No, never. So our hearts are black with sin because of the bad things we do.

Our hearts are black with sin because of the bad things we say. And our hearts are black with sin because of the bad things we think. Isn't it?

All these things. Our hearts are black with sin because of the bad things we do and say and even think. And it doesn't matter how hard we try. And I'm sure you all try to be good boys and good girls, don't you?

Do you? It doesn't matter how hard we try, it's never good enough. We can never make our heart clean. But the Bible promises us that when we confess our sins to God, when we say sorry to God for our sin, the blood of Jesus washes us.

What color? What color is it? No. Our hearts are due, but Jesus is able to wash us as white.

[20 : 47] Gyal, that's right. White as snow. And then it's red again. Oh, I love you, Ava. You're great. And what was the psalm?

What was the psalm? Do you remember the psalm? Psalm 51. Because the amazing thing about Psalm 51, we were singing it earlier. David, who wrote Psalm 51, he was praying to God.

He was asking God to forgive him for his sins. He was saying sorry to God. Because King David had sinned. He had done something really, really, really bad. But David's heart was black because of sin.

And yet, David knew that the blood of Jesus was able to cleanse him and wash him and forgive him for all his sin.

And David prayed. He said to the Lord, wash me and I'll be whiter than the snow. Wash me and I'll be whiter than the snow. And that's what we need to pray.

[21 : 46] We need to come to God with our black hearts because we can't cleanse them. And we need to say, Lord, wash me so I'll be whiter than the snow. Wash me so I'll be whiter than the snow.

And that's what Jesus promises to do. He promises that if we come to him, if we ask for forgiveness, he will cleanse us and wash us. Whiter than the snow.

So on our candy cane, we're nearly done. On our candy cane, what do we see? The letter is? J for? Jesus. J for Jesus.

The angel said, call his name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. We've seen the color. What's the color? Red. Red for blood. Blood of Jesus cleanses us.

And it cleanses us. What's the other color? White. It cleanses us. White as? White as snow. Well done. Okay. Last one.

[22 : 46] Have you still got your candy cane? Have you eaten them all already? You've finished yours, Archie. You've finished it already. Who still has theirs?

Kerry, you've still got it. Well done. Look at that. It's just the boys who ate through them. Look at that. The girls kept them. You're halfway through it, Ross, are you? Did you eat it, Callum?

You've eaten it all. And Alice. Did Alice eat hers too? Oh, you've got a wee bit left, do you, Alice? A wee bit. Will you share it with Granny?

No. Okay. So let's, last one, okay? So we've done J for Jesus. We've done the red for the blood, white for cleansing, as white as snow. Then the last question.

Okay. Why did Jesus come? The last thing we have. You've got J. So turn it upside down. Turn it the other way around. Turn it like that. Right? If we turn it like that, what does it look like?

[23 : 45] No. It looks like a candy cane. So if I say to you, listen, not a letter. We're not doing letters, okay? Maybe Daddy's got one.

Maybe Archie, maybe your Daddy's got one, right? If he's going to be out at the sheep and grab them by the neck. A shepherd's crew, that's right. Well done. So have you ever seen one of them?

Yeah. You've found lots. You've got a hundred of them at home, do you? Well, you'll have to remember this. A shepherd's staff.

Yeah, that's right. So important. So it just looks like it, isn't it? So you turn it that way. You turn it that way, yeah? Show me. You're showing me, yeah? Good job. And it's to remind us, why did Jesus come?

Jesus came to be our... If it's a shepherd's crew, what is it? Jesus came to be our... Our shepherd. Our shepherd. Well done. Jesus came to be our shepherd.

[24 : 45] And as you know, boys and girls, a shepherd is someone who looks after... Sheep. Sheep. Right, yeah. So do you have sheep? Yeah, we have a hundred.

You've got a hundred. Do you think Daddy has too many sheep? Over a hundred. Over a hundred sheep. Do you ever lose any? No. No. Okay, that's good. I need that.

What's that? Oh, you... Okay, all right. We won't talk about that. We'll leave that there. Do you feed the sheep? Yeah. Yeah?

Do you have sheep, Annie? Yeah? Do you feed them? Do you take care of them? Do you take care of them? Take care of the sheep, yeah?

And you know what's the amazing thing is? Jesus promised to do exactly that for us. He promises to feed His sheep and lead His sheep. Jesus promises to feed His sheep.

[25 : 47] Because those who trust in Jesus, those who follow Jesus, the Bible describes us as sheep. And the Bible tells us that Jesus is our good shepherd.

Jesus is our good shepherd. Jesus says in John chapter 10, I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the... Who does Jesus lay down his life for?

The sheep. Jesus lays down His life for the sheep. And what's the name of the shepherd? His name is... Jesus. Yeah. And when the good shepherd laid down His life for the sheep, He shed His blood on the cross.

What color's the blood? Red. And He cleanses us from all sin. He makes us as white as... Snow. Yep, so our hearts are cleansed from being black to turning white.

Whiter than snow. And so Jesus is that amazing shepherd. He's a good shepherd who laid down His life for the sheep. But you know, boys and girls, our Bible not only tells us to confess our sins, it also tells us to confess Jesus as our shepherd.

[26 : 54] So we're to say sorry to God for our sin, but we're also to say, Jesus is my shepherd. Jesus is my shepherd. And that's what we're going to sing about in a moment. In Psalm 23.

I'm sure you... Some of you were learning Psalm 23 in Sunday school. And we're learning those... What's the first line of Psalm 23? Do you remember? The Lord's my shepherd.

The Lord's my shepherd. And that's what we need to be able to say. Can you say that? The Lord's my... What is it? The Lord's my... The Lord's my shepherd.

We have to be able to confess Jesus is my shepherd. And when we confess Jesus as my shepherd, He promises to feed us by reading the Bible and to lead us by reading the Bible.

Jesus promises to care for us and to protect us. And He promises even to follow behind us with His goodness and His mercy all the days of our life.

[27 : 53] And I hope that we'll all follow Jesus as a good shepherd. That we'll all trust in Him as our shepherd. So isn't it amazing what you can learn from a candy cane? And be reminded about this candy cane.

Isn't it? Some of you still haven't eaten it. The others have. It's all disappeared over there. But the best thing about this candy cane... What's the best thing about the candy cane you've just eaten?

Is that it was free. Did you have to pay for it? No. You didn't leave a tip at the door? No. Did you not? Why not? Oh, hey.

So you didn't have to pay for it? Did you have to do anything to receive it? No. Did you have to be good to get it? No. No. All you had to do when you came in through the church door is what?

Pick it up. That's all you had to do. That's all it said, wasn't it? Please take one. You just had to come in and take it. And that's what Jesus says about forgiveness. Jesus says about cleansing.

[28 : 55] Jesus says about being washed as white as snow or whiter than snow. He says, just receive it. It's free. It's absolutely free. It doesn't cost you anything because it cost him everything.

You don't have to pay for it because he paid for it. You don't have to be good enough to receive it. Because Jesus invites sinners. He invites sinners. All we have to do is ask Jesus to save us and wash us and cleanse us whiter than snow.

So all we have to do is accept Jesus as our Savior and confess him as our shepherd. We have to confess Jesus as our shepherd and say, the Lord is my shepherd.

The Lord is my shepherd. So will you remember that? If you remember anything, remember the candy cane. And it teaches us about Jesus, his blood, cleanses us whiter than snow, and that he is our good shepherd.

Well done, boys and girls. You're very, very good at listening. You did very, very well. And having a candy cane to eat through church is just great as well, isn't it? So we're going to clasp our hands.

[30 : 09] We're going to close our eyes. Okay? Ready? Clasp our hands, close our eyes, and we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together, okay? We'll say, 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. Well, thank you, boys and girls, for listening.

You did very, very well. So we're going to sing, in conclusion, the words of Psalm 23. So the Shepherd Psalm. So I want you all to sing this psalm.

Yeah? You were learning it in Sunday school, I think. So page 229 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 23.

[31 : 10] Psalm 23. And 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. I'm going to sing down to the end of the psalm. Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me.

And in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be. The whole psalm. We'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.

He makes me down to lie. In pastures clean he leadeth me.

The quiet waters by. My soul it hath restored again.

[32 : 33] And me too often be. Within the paths of righteousness.

Till for his own name's sake.

Ye do I walk and test a quail.

Yet will I fear not ill. For thou art with me and I walk.

And stuff me comfort still. My table thou hast burned.

[33 : 52] 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 eyes forevermore my dwelling place shall be.

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.