

Advent Thought for the Day

17-20 December

by Rev. Wendy Sellers

17 December



And he was called... 'Mary's firstborn son'

'And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn'.

(Luke 2. 7)

If you are an only child, chances are no-one would refer to you as 'firstborn'. If you have brothers and sisters, this title then makes sense. The Bible lists four brothers of Jesus – James, Joseph, Judas (or Jude) and Simon, and also mentions un-named sisters. In spite of this, it has often been claimed by the church that Mary, mother of Jesus, remained a life-long virgin. His siblings have been explained away as being Joseph's children from a previous marriage. I think some of us might struggle with that explanation!

Personally, I love the idea of Jesus being part of a family. The Bible suggests he had the love and support of that family throughout his life and that, after his ascension, they continued his work.

To most of us, family is incredibly important: and this time of year really highlights that. Does it matter whether your family is biological, or acquired through marriage, or based on friends, or faith-based? I don't think it does at all. What matters most of all is that we are loved and that we love.

18 December



And he was called... 'Messiah'

'The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.'

(Matthew 1. 1)

One of the highlights of my life has been singing Handel's Messiah. Its words tell the story of the Messiah from the prophecies of his birth through his life, his death and his ascension. It's often sung at Christmas, but the Hallelujahs of its famous chorus are sung not at the birth of Jesus, but after the resurrection.

While we prepare to welcome the Messiah as a baby on Christmas Day, we always have to remember that the whole story matters – the things which came before the birth and all that followed afterwards. Jesus is for life, not just for Christmas!

*Dearest Lord Jesus,
May we not leave you in the manger, but follow you as
you journey to the cross, the grave, the skies. Amen*

19 December



And he was called... 'Christ'

'He [Andrew] first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" [which means Christ]'.

(John 1. 41)

The word 'Messiah' comes from a Hebrew word meaning anointed or chosen one. By the time Jesus was born, the Jewish people believed that their scriptures prophesied that this special person would come and save them. When Andrew first met Jesus, he rushed to tell his brother, Simon Peter, that he had found the Messiah. Andrew knew who Jesus was from the very first encounter.

The Greek word for Messiah is Christ – the word we use most often. But they are one and the same – Messiah and Christ. However we choose to describe Jesus - whatever names we use - He remains one and the same. He is God.

20 December



And he was called... 'Saviour'.

*'But the angel said to them 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord'.
(Luke 2. 10-11)*

If I were American, I'd spell Saviour as Savior. No 'u'.
And then what I'm about to say wouldn't make sense!

Believe, in your heart, that the 'u' in Saviour serves as a reminder that Jesus came to save 'you'. He came not to show how strong he was (he was born a baby). He came not to show how great he was (he rode a donkey). He came not to show how powerful he was (he died on a cross). He came because he thought you personally were worth saving.

Hold that thought tightly to your heart today.

Jesus came for you.