

HOPE



Auchinleck
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
Serving Christ, Serving the Community

It's about the Cross

For many, Christmas is about parties and presents, for some it is fun and frivolity or even family or friends, sadly, for many it is about loss and loneliness. To different people it means different things.

However, what IS Christmas all about?

It is about a birth. Births are normally exciting events. Parents have high hopes for their children, anticipating and desiring for them a long, healthy and prosperous life.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was born, however, his life was destined to be spent in poverty, misunderstanding, rejection and ultimately crucifixion. This was His purpose. **We are born to live – He was born to die!!**

The cradle was the but the prelude – **the cross was the purpose of His life!!**

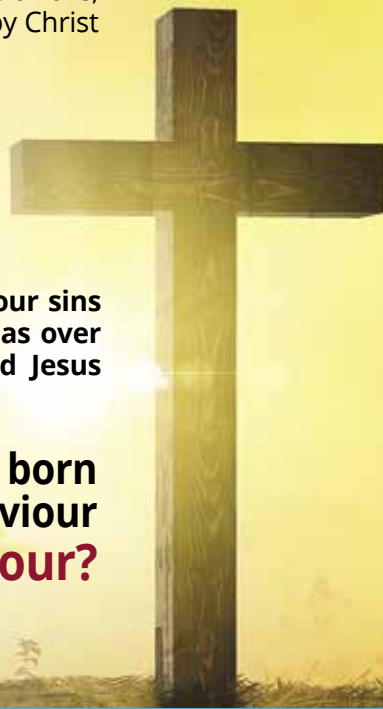
His birth was necessary, but His death was vital. It was vital for me, for you, indeed for all humanity.

"The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." (1 John 4.14). "You shall call His name, Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1.21) This purpose of "saving sinners", which we all are, and which we all need, was accomplished, not by Christ being born but by dying.

Romans 5.6 :- "When we were yet without strength (**unable to save ourselves**) Christ died for the ungodly." Romans 5.8 :- "But God commends His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

How can we experience and enjoy salvation (**deliverance from the penalty our sins deserve as well as the power that sin has over us**)? Acts 16.31 :- "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.**"

**He was born
to be The Saviour
- is He Your Saviour?**



POET'S CORNER

It's not just about the manger
Where the baby lay
It's not all about the angels
Who sang for him that day

*It's about the cross
It's about my sin
It's about how Jesus came to be
born once
So that we could be born again
It's about the stone
That was rolled away
So that you and I could have real
life someday
It's about the cross*

It's not just about the presents
Underneath the tree
It's not all about the feeling
That the season brings to me
It's not just about the good things
In this life I've done
It's not all about the treasures
Or the trophies that I've won

It's not about the righteousness
That I've found within
It's all about His precious blood
That saves me from my sin

It's about God's love
Nailed to a tree
It's about every drop of blood that
flowed from Him
When it should have been me

*The beginning of the story is wonderful and great
But it's the ending that can save
you and that's why we celebrate
It's about the cross
It's about my sin
It's about how Jesus came to be
born once
So that we could be born again.*



GRANT MULLEN

TESTIMONY OF THE GRACE OF GOD

Weekly cocaine and whisky binges, daily weed smoking, while trying to stay straight enough to pick the next horse, or football coupon to keep my gambling habit both profitable and sustainable for the next big bet. A life of pleasure, excess, hedonism, and selfishness. A monthly drug bill of £1000 and a gambling account that would fry your brain. **But that's what life is about right?**

"There's nothing else for it", "I'll sleep when I'm dead", "here for a good time, not a long time" all cliches used as I watched the sunrise on another day while I was still in the midst of last night's party. **That was my life!**

Suddenly, everything caught up with me, I'd been running, running fast! running hard! running wild! My past! My present! My life! How did I get here, how did I allow some of this stuff to even happen?

For four months, from Feb to June 2017, I relived my past, my sexual immorality, my drunkenness, my drug abuse, my violence, my pride, my jealousy, my thefts, my selfishness, all the people I'd hurt.

Where did it all come from? I was remembering things, that previously I had pushed so deep into the recesses of my mind that I had forgotten them. They played in my mind night and day for four months. I took up Buddhist practices, including meditation, looking for the promised "inner peace" but finding no lasting relief.

My conclusion – if there is a God, and by this point I believed that there was, I was going to hell and deserved to!!

Suddenly, strangely, everywhere I go, conversations, with random people, at customers doors or on the internet, turn to Jesus and God, not by my initiation but by theirs!!

It must be coincidence, but how are they answering the questions I have without me asking them? Are they reading my mind? **The drugs must have messed up my mind I thought.** However, my work mate, who I had been using as my sounding board for these four months, said, "Whatever it is that is happening, is definitely happening, and it's very weird, you're not losing your



Grant Mullen

mind, and it's happening to you and not me. What do you think is happening?" I replied, **"I think Jesus is real, and we are knocking on these doors, but he is knocking on mine, saying wake up I'm trying to get through to you."**

It was time to bite the bullet. I visited my family and gathered them all together. They thought Sarah must be pregnant, but I was there to tell them that I believed that God is real! My mother said, "That is weird, because when you were born, we had a cutting of your hair placed in a Bible, and put away, but I came across it the other day and sat it out for you to take home with you". **That is weird right?** Thirty years that Bible sat in a cupboard, until God led my mum to take it out two days before I came to tell them that He was real!!

After that I prayed my first meaningful prayer, **"Jesus, if you are real, I want to know you, if this has been you these past four months, please speak to me now."**

I took the Bible my mum had given me and, with eyes closed, randomly flicked through the pages and it opened at **Revelation 3:20 :- "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."**

Friends, that's the day I met Jesus Christ.

A few days later a lady contacted me, through Sarah meeting her in a car park, to tell me the gospel of salvation, how Christ died for my sins, and was buried, and rose again the third day.

She said, "Grant, you have done things you should never have done, that's sin, but Christ died to take your punishment, your sins were laid on him, and if you will only believe Him, trust Him as your Saviour, then you will be saved."

I fell on my knees, "Jesus, I believe you are the Saviour of my soul, I confess my sins to you, please have mercy on my soul, I don't want to go to hell, I want to be saved, I know it's been You, I am opening the door to You, please come in and save me" (That was the second prayer I ever made that I actually meant.)

Four months I had been in a living Hell tormented by past and present sins – now relief. I stood up, feeling the great, crushing weight tangibly lifting off my shoulders. Why hadn't I previously known that I had this weight. Well, how I was living was just life, right? Wrong, I testify to you, that wasn't life, but death in a thousand different ways!

There is more to life than the partying and pleasures, etc, etc, etc. There is Jesus – who is LIFE and offers LIFE to all who trust Him.

Is He knocking on your door?

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

THE WORDSMITHS –

JAMES BOSWELL AND SAMUEL JOHNSON

Probably the **most famous person from Auchinleck** was **James Boswell**. He was born on the 19th October 1740. He was primarily a writer, his first publication being, “*A View of the Edinburgh Theatre.*” He wrote various journals and diaries over his lifetime. His early desire was to meet Dr Samuel Johnson, the famous journalist and lexicographer, of whom the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography says was “**arguably the most distinguished man of letters in English history**”. They met for the first time in May 1763 and thereafter developed a long, although unlikely, friendship. The common denominator was their love of words. Johnson spent almost a week visiting with Boswell at Auchinleck House in November 1773. Afterwards he spoke warmly of Auchinleck but said that it was “incommoded by very frequent rain”!!

Boswells’ greatest work is reckoned to be, “*Life of Samuel Johnson*”, his biography of his friend, published in 1791. It was described as “*the best biography ever written*” and “*beyond any other product of the eighteenth century.*” It was selected by Walter Jackson Bate as “*the most famous single work of biographical art in the whole of literature.*”

However, in this short article my mind is more directed towards **the Word, rather than many words**. It is interesting that in the Bible, John commences his biography of the life and works of the Lord Jesus by writing, “**In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.**” (John 1.12), he continues in verse 14 to say, “**And the Word was made flesh** and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father,) full of **grace and truth.**”

“The Word” seems a strange name, or title, to give to anyone. It’s interesting that “The Word” (Jesus) existed before “a word” was ever expressed!!

Words are a means of communication and, as such, “The Word” is God’s means of communicating with us. In Hebrews 1.1-2 we read, “God, who in sundry times



James Boswell



Dr Samuel Johnson

and in divers manners, spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken unto us in Son.” In Revelation 1.8 the Lord refers to himself as, “**the alpha and the omega..**”. So, the Lord Jesus Christ is the alphabet of God, the Word of God and the message of God. God’s messenger and God’s message is Christ Jesus. The emphasis is not so much the words that He spoke but the fact that He Himself as the Word is the Message!!

If the Lord Jesus is God’s last message to men, what is He saying in Him? In one of the verses quoted above, John tells us what he saw in Him – “grace and truth”. We are sadly, living in a “post truth” society. No absolutes – all is relative – so believe what you like, and if you are happy with what you believe, then let everyone be happy with you and for you. **However, Jesus says, “...I am the truth..”** (John 14.6) It is not just that He tells the truth, but He is the truth. He is the Standard that we have all fallen short of. Romans 3:23 :- “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;**” What are the implications? We are all found wanting and condemned to die (physically and eternally) – that’s the argument outlined in the letter to the Romans (please take the time to read through it). **That’s a bleak message – all condemned.** However, He is also full of grace. In Titus 2:11, we read, “**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.**” Grace is God’s undeserved favour to unworthy sinners that offers them salvation from the consequences of their sins, on account of Christ taking the punishment in their place. Paul sums it up in the following verses :-

Romans 3.23-26 :- “**For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the **justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.**”

Do you believe?





Struggling - Benefits Cut, Sanctioned, finding it difficult to make ends meet??

We provide a food bank in the hall at Park Road at 2pm every Thursday & at The Hub, Furnace Rd Muirkirk at 11am every Friday

Family Service

Our all-age family service is held each Sunday @ 12.30pm

You are invited to come along to our

Christmas Service

Sunday 19th December
soup and other refreshments
served from 12.45pm
service starts
at 1.30pm

All ages welcome

Friday @ 9.30 - 11.00
(term time only)
Please contact Ruth on
07402 468 244
for details.

For times of other meeting see website

CONTACT DETAILS

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