

7 pm 'Christmas Mystery' (Video 2.42ms)

Prayer: It's Christmas EVE God, the night we remember and celebrate your gift to us – your son 'Jesus'. Sometimes the whole 'faith' thing is a mystery for us – and sometimes just bits of it are – but tonight we relax the walls of our thinking, the pile of mysteries to remember and celebrate. Thank you God for your Son, Jesus who was born to Mary and given to us. Touch our lives anew tonight we ask, in Jesus name. Amen

Ok so how many of you have looked under your Christmas Tree already?

How many have lifted out a present or two. Shaken them slightly? Rattled them? Tried to guess????

We love suspense – don't we? Love mysteries?

Or is that a qualified 'love' of mystery, suspense, of the unknown????

As if we allow ourselves to be able to 'love' mystery – when it is in a controlled environment – like under the Christmas Tree?

What happen when the environment is bigger and beyond our control? Are we still confident of our 'love' for mystery, or suspense and the unknown???? – I suspect not!

Faith is a mystery – and completely beyond our control. Which is one of the things that makes it so hard to believe in; until you have had an experience that lets you know there are boundaries – even if invisible, boundaries that keep us safe – in the Lord.

I do not equate "Safe" with keeping us 'alive'; nor is 'safe' equated with no persecution, nor equated with no life challenges..... Safe means the Lord has us in hand – safe hands and will never let us go.

A faith mystery is that we believe those 'spiritual' hands to be for real, **because of Christmas**. In Jesus God's hands became real flesh and blood so that we could trust he knew – what it was to live in our human skin!

But there's more to God coming in Jesus; more than just to live as a human, and that it the reason why.

God came to us – because God is hungry for our friendship, hungry to be with us.

Our being with him – as in: our talking to Him, our listening to him talking to us, for us to keep in touch – and tell him about our day – about our burning tears, about how we laughed till we cried... God wants us – and so our faith says this Creator God came in Jesus so be with us – from birth to death.

Show Video: (2.4 mins)

"The angel in the Christmas story said it best....

"I bring you good news of great Joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord" Luke 2:10-12 "

God –in Christ as the healer of our soul, as the saviour of our lives has come and it's good news! The all-powerful creator has entered our world – our time because you are wanted, your company is valued, your voice is expected... your presence desired... God wants to know you and be known by

you, to love you and be loved by you..... And so God of the Universe, Creator of the stars came in Jesus – at Christmas for you.

And if that's not a mystery – I don't know what is. cV

I have another mystery for you – does anyone know what this is a picture of?

It is the very first Christmas card! It was drawn by a John Horsley, an artist friend of Sir Henry Cole and sold for 1 shilling, although that's only approx. 8 cents nz today, it was a small fortune in those days, 1843!

This first Christmas card had three panels. The outer two panels showed people caring for the poor and in the centre panel was a family having a large Christmas dinner! Some people didn't like the card because it showed a child being given a glass of wine!

Sir Henry was a UK civil servant (Government worker) who was very interested in the new 'Public Post Office' and wondered how it could be used more by ordinary people. So together with his artist friend they came up with the idea of Christmas Cards. So people could get in touch / stay in touch with each other over Christmas.

Staying in touch – means keeping the relationships – while it might be increasingly more common to skype, text... this old fashioned way was good and is still keeping the Post Office busy!

In a moment I am going to invite you to turn to your table companions and over about 5 mins share one thing **you heard** that was new; one thing that was old news; one thing that you think might be important for you. 1. New; 1 old; 1 important for you.

But – just before I do, I want to invite you to think how you keep the relationship between the Creator of the Universe – who came as a baby human for the total reason to be with you, how you are going to keep the relationship alive? Move it out of mystery and into your life.

So:

Discussion: Turn to your table companions, and share one thing **you heard** that was new; one thing that was old news; one thing that you think might be important for you. 1. New; 1 old; 1 important for you.