

The Word's Revelation

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[0 : 0 0] So I'm going to tell you what Christmas is really all about. That's what I'm going to spend the next sort of 20-ish minutes doing. That's what Christmas is about. Christmas is all about one big, juicy, shocking revelation.

One big, juicy, shocking revelation. Everyone loves a shocking revelation, don't they? If you're on Facebook, that's how Clickbait gets you. The heading, shocking celebrity revelation.

You can't scroll past that without clicking. Because you want to find out what, you know, and it's normally what have Harry and Meghan been up to now.

Some sort of shocking, for me, it doesn't have to be celebrities. For me, I can't scroll past when it says shocking transfer news in football. Amazing line-up of new movie.

You can't help from clicking on the latest revelation. Before we had Clickbait, we just had the papers, didn't we? The back page for the football or magazines trying to do the same.

[1 : 0 3] The latest shocking revelation. Christmas is one big, juicy, shocking revelation. But it's the best time. It's the best time. Because it's not slagging someone off or having a go.

Because it's good news. The reason it's good news. This is the reason it's good news. Because Christmas is the big, juicy, shocking revelation about what God is like.

I want to show you from the verses about what it says about what God is like. About what God is like. I've seen it in verse 18.

One of the things it says. It says, in the verse 18, from the verses we've read, it says that no one has ever seen God. No one has ever seen God. If you've never seen something, you can't know about it, can you?

If you've never seen something, you need to read or to hear to be told the gossip. The revelation about whatever you want to know about. You can't know something that you haven't been told.

[2 : 0 4] You know even more if you see it with your own eyes. That's right, isn't it? I can tell you about my favourite film. I was rethinking, I was actually rethinking this video there.

What is, and I've forgotten how much I love Forrest Gump. How great I love Forrest Gump. It's brilliant. But even if I were to tell you about that all day, even if I could repeat the script to you, you would need to know, you would need to see the movie yourself to really know about the movie Forrest Gump.

You need to see it for yourself. Verse 18 says, no one has ever seen God. You keep thinking about that verse, but.

Because what does it say next? There's a but. It says no one has ever seen God, and then it says but. But. The one and only Son who is himself God, and is in closest relationship with the Father, and here it is, has made him.

You boil that down. You can boil that down. What it's boiled down to is that the one and only Son, Jesus Christ, has made the unseen God known.

[3 : 13] Christmas is when one big, juicy, shocking revelation about God is telling us this, that this little baby born into the world, Jesus Christ, whose birth Christians celebrate every year, this little baby has revealed the unseen God to the world.

which means, this is what it means, this is what it means, this is what it means, it means that if we look at Jesus, and we see what he is like, we see what God is like.

If we want to know what God is like, all you need to do, all you need to do, is to look for what Jesus is like. It is impossible for me to cover everything right now, of what that means.

Impossible. So everything about what Jesus is like. So I just want to focus on two things about what it says in the verses that I've read. It says that Jesus is full of grace, and it says that he's full of truth.

Full of grace and full of truth. First 14 is full of grace and truth. Verse 17, who have grace and truth, came to Jesus Christ. We're actually going to look at them backwards in the order that they came.

[4 : 21] Instead of looking at grace and truth, we're going to look at truth and grace. The first one, Jesus is full of truth. And we're even going to split that up into two things. We're going to split it up into Jesus embodies truth, and then Jesus tells us the truth.

Jesus embodies truth, and then he tells us the truth. Jesus embodies truth. We live in a world, don't we, where we don't actually know, we're not quite sure what's true anymore. In the last five to ten years, we've seen the emergence of fake news made up by whoever wants to say whatever.

It's immensely frustrating. How do we know if what you're reading or watching is real? The development of AI and the way that you can create the real picture of someone who appears to be saying something.

You think, is it true or not? And we don't know what to believe. There's a lack of truth. It's not just on social media. So is it on the internet, the mishandling of facts and figures across our world?

Isn't it sad? I was thinking this. Isn't it sad that we now have fact-checking websites that look into politicians' speeches to check if what they actually said is actually correct?

[5 : 32] It's kind of sad that we need that. There's corruption, scandals, cover-ups, manipulation. All of that stuff makes us less likely to trust what we hear and the people that we see.

The big question is how do we know if someone is genuine or not? I think the only thing you can go on is a person's character.

And the more you see that person's character up close, then you can make a decision about that person as you get to know them. One of the kind of things we look for in a person's character is things like that.

There's integrity, honesty, humility. People who care and bless others. People who never have a bad word to say about anyone else. Who stand up to injustice.

Who look out for the impoverished. And to really trust someone, you don't want to, it's not just a one-off that they do that, but they seem to do that repeatedly all the time. If we were to believe in trust, that Jesus is the truth, that he embodies what truth is, we'd have to see something of that in him.

[6 : 44] You would expect his life to be the truest, best life that you could imagine. That's what you'd expect to see. When you look at Jesus' life, that is exactly what you see.

That Jesus is the truth of what we all wish humanity was like. He feeds the hungry, heals people who are ill. When people meet him, they leave changed and different.

Go from being robes to pillars of the community, blessing people. Frantic lives becoming beacons of rest and peace. The shamed are accepted, the guilty are forgiven, the lost are found, orphans get given a family.

Widows are cared for the poor, the marginalised and the forgotten are given a place at his table. He makes the wrongs of our world right. He's a perfect example of what people are supposed to be without fault.

Because he's the truest representation of what a human should be. He embodies truth in you. Second thing, so he embodies truth.

[7 : 49] The second thing is he tells us the truth. Not only is he truth in himself, he tells us the truth about ourselves. And the difficulty is that he tells us the truth about ourselves that we don't always want to hear.

We need to hear what's hard to hear. Let me give you an illustration of why we need to hear the truth. I don't know, have you ever been getting ready to go out and you've accidentally spilled something on your clothes, coffee or toothpaste and you haven't done it?

I've done that. What you need, don't you, is you need someone to tell you that you've done that. You need someone to say you've got a big stain on your shirt.

You need someone to point out that's good if they point out what you've done. Something that you can't see. At least give you a chance to wipe it or clean the stain.

When that happens, we appreciate being told so that we can make ourselves more presentable. That's what we need to hear.

[8 : 54] But the truth is actually, if we need to hear it about our clothes, we need to hear it about something much more important. We need to hear it about ourselves, our character, who we are.

And we might not like it, but it's important. Jesus isn't afraid of telling us what we're really like. He tells us the truth. What we're really like.

And we need that because sometimes we can't see it. We need to be told. And it's hard to hear, but don't we need to realise when we have a character flaw and we need to see it? I want you to imagine this.

When I think about this, this distresses me. It distresses my mind having to even contemplate that this situation could occur. I want you to imagine that a film, a movie, a film, a movie of your entire life is played for everyone to see.

Everyone. If you were, if everyone had to watch a movie of your life, of course there'd be moments, scenes in your life where you'd be happy.

[9 : 57] Holidays in the sun. Birthdays. Times when you're on tuck form. Doing good deeds. Celebrating things. You'd look forward. I'll wait for this bit. This is great for this bit that's coming up. But there would be moments in that.

In my life I'd be like, oh no, not this, not this year, not that soon, not that day when I'd be mortified, embarrassed, gone, please don't stop this to everyone.

You'd want to hide. We've all messed up. As the saying goes, we've been perfect. We've all messed up and been adapted. Even if we struggle to admit it, deep down, if you look back at your life, we all know those moments that we're ashamed of that we could change if we could do it all again.

It's hard to accept. And it's hard to hear. But it's good, isn't it? Isn't it good? Just like someone points out stains and you're closing, you'd say, thanks for telling me I'll go get a new shirt.

It's good if someone can point out and isn't afraid to tell you about yourself. Jesus is a virtuous person. He is what we wish we were all like.

[11 : 10] And yet we know that we don't measure up to how good he is. He tells us what we're really like. He tells us that we've fallen short. He tells us what the Bible calls sin and it's a problem.

But Jesus embodies truth. Jesus tells the truth. The last thing when we talk about truth, we're going to talk about grace. Second thing we're going to talk about is grace. Jesus says he's full of grace.

We're told that twice. Two or three times it mentions the word grace. What is grace? You hear it all the time. Grace is kindness that we don't deserve.

That is what grace is. Kindness that we don't deserve. Jesus is full of it. He's full of kindness. And everyone, doesn't matter who you are, across the world wants to receive kindness.

Everyone wants other people to be gracious to them. We all want people to be kind to us. Especially when we don't deserve it. I don't know if you've had that experience. Where you're invited either to someone's house for dinner or perhaps to go out for coffee and you're running late.

[12 : 16] Ten minutes. Oh man. Ten minutes late. Turns into 20. Turns into 30. Somehow time seems to vanish. All of a sudden you're 45 minutes late and you start to feel bad.

Oh man. What are they going to think of me? You're texting me. You're sorry I'm in there. I'll be there as soon as I can. In that situation, when you eventually get there, what do you not know?

You don't want the person who you're meeting to answer it like that. We don't want to be in the school there and be ready to riot out.

45 minutes late. Don't you realise I haven't been here? That's the last thing we want. If I'd known any better, I wouldn't have bothered. Sat here 45 minutes on me jackson. That's not what we want.

We want to hear don't. It's not a problem. It's fine. We want kindness. Even if we don't deserve it. We want grace. The living though.

[13 : 19] Jesus Christ. He's seen everything we've done. The good and the bad. He's seen the movie of your life. He's seen every second.

Every scene of your life he's seen. He knows every second of the movie of your life that's coming. And he offers full, undeserved kindness.

Grace. You see, what we're really touching on here is the reasons Jesus came at all. The reason God became a man.

The reason he came was actually not only to tell you the truth. But he came to show us grace despite the truth about ourselves. Undisturbed kindness. That's the reason he came.

And the biggest demonstration of that grace didn't come at Christmas when he was born. But he came at the end of his life when he died. At the end of his life he died on a cross.

[14 : 17] He died on a cross to take all of our mess, all of our character flaws, all those moments on the movie of our lives where we would cover our eyes in embarrassment. Those moments that separate us from him.

You see, what the cross at the end of his life, the punishment for our mess, as the Bible puts it, sin was put on Jesus' shoulders instead of our own. And he died in our place.

What Jesus really says at the cross is, I've seen everything you've done. I've told you the truth about who you are. I've seen it all, but I'm going to take the rap for you. You're going to be let off in place of me, who's going to, the truest representation of what humanity should be, who don't deserve to die, will choose willingly to die in place of you.

So that you can feel forgiveness and freedom and truth. We get his goodness. And he takes it. For those who put their faith and trust in Jesus, there is no scar on his face.

Just can't. Just open our eyes. Jesus has never stopped. He's never, we can read about it in the Bible, and he did it all those years ago, but he's never stopped changing lives.

[15 : 31] You know, that's certainly the proof that he's, one of the proofs that actually he's still at work today, is that every follower of Jesus, me included, can tell you how he personally changed my life, and changed people's, and he had changed their life.

We were going down a road, and he came, intervened, plucked us out, and dropped us somewhere else, and said, walk this way, not that way, changed our life. And he's doing it to their past the world.

There are countless people who can point to Jesus being the reason that they live in a different way. What they used to be like before they met him, and what they're like now is totally different.

Given a new life, and him with hope, with a future, with peace and joy, with a trajectory, with purpose, putting their old ways behind and starting fresh. Today, this Christmas, if you feel stagnant, anxious, you need a peace.

If you look at our world in despair, if you're fed up and want change, if you've made mistakes and want forgiveness, Jesus will accept you. Jesus will accept you.

[16 : 40] Unconditionally. No conditions. Stopping attached. Sounds too good to be true. It is true. If you lack purpose and ask questions of what it's all about, if you're restless or flat, Jesus says, come to me.

All you will wear and wear and wear and wear and wear. You'll give me rest in the sun. He'll give you a future and a hope. He'll change it. He'll give you kindness that you don't deserve, that lasts.

It's not just for a day. I don't know what everyone here thinks about God. I don't know where you stand with Jesus. Maybe you've never thought about it ever. Maybe this is the first time.

Or maybe you have once in a while, years ago. Maybe you taught it as a child, but you haven't thought about it for a long time. Why not this Christmas reflect on the truth about Jesus?

Because that is why we have to. Why not reflect on the amazing offer that he offers every single person of life with him, a fresh start? Because that's why we're celebrating the coming to the world of the word God himself, the coming of life, who came to do all this for you and for you.

[17 : 52] One big, juicy, shocking revelation. That God has made himself known in the person of his son Jesus Christ, the truest person.

The truest person. Who tells the truth. And he's full of grace. To give you a future. To give you forgiveness, peace.

And so that we can accept his life. Do you know that? Do you know that thing that we all do? We all do it. We try so hard in our lives to do so, to be accepted by our people.

I do it. We so want people's... We so want praise people's approval. We're making the right decisions for our lives and for the way that we're going.

We want admiration. And it crushes us when we do something and we don't get it. So in order to get someone else's approval, we have to meet their conditions of what they find acceptable so that we have their approval.

[18 : 58] The approval of God is unconditional. Unconditional. You have to feel anything to be loved by it.

To accept you as human. Just because you know that. Okay.

Almighty God, we just thank you so much for Christmas. We thank you so much for the coming of Jesus Christ.

You came to save us. You came as the perfect example, the truest healing it's ever been, the truest reality of what it means to be a healing. And you came to tell us the truth, and we know it's hard to accept the way we make mistakes.

So I thank you that you have told us, because you don't leave it just there, that you show us this grace. Amazing. Now you've swapped places, built with us, so that we can have a future and a hope for forgiveness, and it will be unconditionally loved and accepted.

[20 : 07] Not just for one day, but for eternity. We pray that we lift up our arms, this Christmas. And as we said to the kids, that we've realised that every present wants to leave us.

The gift of Jesus. And the Lord is the Savior. We pray for this and we ask for this. And the Lord is the Savior. Amen.

Amen.