

GOODWILL TOWARD MEN: Luke 2:14.

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Luke 2:1-20.

This is the message of the heavenly host who have been sent by the Lord of hosts. Our Lord could have availed Himself of twelve legions of angels at His death but refused. He had a large company of angels, however, to announce His birth.

1. Good news from heaven.

The news from earth is bad news. It is like the stories that we read in the newspapers. At the moment it is news of the pandemic, illnesses, death, disputes and loneliness. For many people, this Christmas, like previous Christmases, is like an anaesthetic to help us forget everything that has gone before or is following afterwards. There is no good news that we can shout back to heaven. If we try to make out that we are doing OK, it is hardly convincing. Our wars, cruelty, selfishness and loveless behaviour tell a different story about us. We try works of self improvement, mindfulness, philosophy, but it does little to really change us and the message that gets relayed back to heaven.

This news from heaven is, however, good news. It is news that comes from the highest authority, from God Himself. It is like receiving a Royal Pardon which has the authority and value of the sovereign. The perspective that the One who issues this good news possesses, has eternity in view. His power is limitless. His knowledge is infinite. His wisdom is profound. His love is boundless. As Judge, He sits in a court that is forbidding because the standards it expects are too high for us. This court, however, actually communicates to us that there is no case to answer. Justice, mercy and righteousness work in harmony to issue us a message of goodwill.

The goodwill is very and practical. It is not something vague with no reality behind it. Behind it lies the good news about our Lord Jesus Christ, coming into the world. It needed a host of angel to do justice to this good news and to make it un-mistakable. It is a message of salvation available today. As with the shepherds, it is a message for ordinary people.

2. Goodwill.

The message conveys to us heaven's smile. We have a Saviour who has come and done everything necessary to save us from our sin. The goodwill is assured to us and sincerely

meant because it is backed up by the work of the Saviour for us. We are not to doubt and we are not to be afraid (v10).

We are to see that there is no catch. It is as good as it sounds. There are no hidden terms and condition, no small print to deceive us. Everything to do with our salvation is looked after and is secure. It is all in our Saviour's hands and He needs the help of no-one else. His life seems so small and vulnerable at the beginning, but He is protected and nothing will stop Him being able to survive the wickedness of man and prevail in His purpose. He will be escorted safely through life to the cross itself.

This goodwill will need the death of the Saviour. But He knows that and knew it from the beginning. He has agreed to it, and what it means will be something He becomes more aware of as He proceeds.

The goodwill of God, as seen in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, is full of love. It is unrestrained love since the Lord is pleased to do this work on behalf of His people. He really does mean it!

That goodwill also travels everywhere with us. It goes with us all through life. We can wake up each day with hope and joy. We may have difficulties and hardships ahead of us, but the message of goodwill still rings in our ears.