

presents or even cartoon characters having a happy holiday!!!! The choice was yours and you may not even have thought about it but did you rejoice in your faith or hide it!

The choice will be yours again in eleven and a half months time ~ will it be different?

Isaiah, Luke and Paul rejoiced in what God had and was doing for them ~ they wrote it down to share and we thank God for them. We thank God for each other ~ but what are we thankful about ~ how we benefit from each other or how we, together, share God's Love for us?

After all, as disciples we are commanded to go make disciples of others ~ that means knowing Jesus and making Him known in any way that we have the opportunity and gifting to do so!

So as the world starts its New Year what are our gifting's and are we looking for the opportunities to use them? Amen.



Ministry Musings Christmastide Blessings

INDESCRIBABLE
Gif  

So what is this indescribable gift?

Isaiah this morning tells us ~

I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.

For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Do we allow God to prepare us as a bridegroom or a bride?

God wants us, as His children, to know we are adopted and therefore inheritors of His kingdom ~ Galatians 4: 4-7.

Luke describes throughout his Nativity narratives how all who heard and saw this amazing event rejoiced in God's Glory and were compelled to tell others of their experience. Those experiences enabled their obedience to God to develop and continue.

Mary pondered everything in her heart. Do you ponder on what God does for you or do you take God for granted? If you take God for granted how can you be obedient to His Will in your life? When Mary and Joseph took their firstborn Son to be circumcised and named ~they called Him Jesus as the angel had directed before His conception.

Seek to be a bridegroom or a bride of Christ in your developing
'Knowing Jesus ~ Making Him known'.

Isaiah 61:10—62:3 OT page 702
Galatians 4:4-7 NT page 186
Luke 2:15-21 NT page 56

In our Gospel this morning we are told by Luke that once the angels had left the shepherds, the shepherds had a quick conflagration and decided that they must act on what they had been told. They just had to go to Bethlehem to check it out for themselves!

So off they went, abandoning the flocks that they were responsible for (or may be herding them down to the narrow streets of the town until they found their destination – which would not have been such a mad sight in their time)

We are told that they found Mary and Joseph and the baby ~ just as had been described to them. When the shepherds had seen these things for themselves they spread the word ~ telling all who would hear just what the angels had said about this child and they amazed everyone!

Mary, just held all that happened in her heart and thought deeply about all that she was experiencing and had herself been told by the angel.

The shepherds could not help themselves, their lives had been changed and they praised God for all that they had heard and seen.

When the eighth day came, Mary and Joseph followed the Jewish custom and took Jesus to be circumcised and named ~ and they called Him Jesus ~ the name given by the angel before He was conceived.

After Jesus had been crucified and Risen again, Paul writes to the faithful in Galatia reminding them of the happenings ~ how God sent His Son; born under the law but to challenge that law so that we might inherit the fullness of God's Love and the fulfilment of His promises or Covenant. Paul reminds

his readers that we will experience this inheritance through the Holy Spirit in our hearts so that we, as God's children, call Him Abba Father as we are no longer slaves having to show our faith through rituals and rules but are free to share our own experiences with all who will hear us! That implies that we cannot keep our experiences to ourselves but have to share them.

And all that fulfils what Isaiah had prophesied all those years before Christ's coming ~ that he rejoiced greatly in God because he had been clothed in Salvation, accepted as an heir and how that would grow like seeds sown to become available to all. Isaiah saw that it was important not to keep silent but would let his faith show like a torch so that the nations could see the truth for themselves and be recognised with a new name ~ a name that shows we have seen and heard for ourselves ~ the name of Christian ~ given by God through sending His Son. But Isaiah has one more important thing to say about those who this new name bestowed on them ~ he says that each one named will be a crown of splendour in the Lord's hand! A jewel for our God and Father.

Think on that for a moment ~ you carry the name Christian.

On this 5th Sunday of the churches New Year and the Eve of the Worlds New Year do you own that name and show it in your daily life?

Reflect on the past few weeks as you have prepared for Christmas ~ have you been preoccupied with the material preparations and pressures or have you taken them in your stride and used them to reflect what you believe and not fallen in with the worlds excuses to celebrate?

One simple check you can make ~ if you sent Christmas cards what did they depict? You could have sought out cards that had elements of the Nativity on them and shown your faith quietly or you could have sent images of Christmas trees, robins,