

Luke 2.8-20

Surprise!

Amington

Tuesday 25 December 2018

Christmas Morning

Birthday Surprise

Who likes surprises? What is the best surprise you've ever had?

If you're like me, you *don't* like surprises... for my 21st birthday my parents organised a lovely weekend in France for us all to stay in a friend's house – except they'd also arranged for my school friends to be there as well!

I discovered it when we went to the supermarket to get supplies – and I ran into Mike... and then Hugh... I said, 'What are you doing here?!' They said, 'We're here for your birthday...'

My response was a rather uncharitable, 'No you're not!'

I actually went into shock – the surprise was so total, so complete. I have now warned Jess... don't plan a big surprise for me!

Christmas Surprise

Jesus' birth was a big surprise too – think of those poor shepherds out **in the fields!** – and why do you think whenever the angels showed up their first words were, **'Do not be afraid?'** (10)

It's hard to us to appreciate the surprise of the first Christmas, and how unexpected it was – because we know the story so well. Have you ever wished you could forget a favourite book or film, so you could have the pleasure of reading it or seeing it for the first time again? I often wonder how I'd react to the Christmas story if I heard it for the first time today.

It's hard to reclaim the sense of surprise, wonder, the unexpected nature of the first Christmas – **all who heard it were amazed** (18). But I think it's important that we try not to let it go – why?

Because God still works like that *today*. He still works through the unexpected, through surprise, and through wonder.

So my hunch is that, if we hold on to the surprise of Christmas, we will be more able to see the ways God might be surprising us today. As we head into the New Year, let's pray God would keep our hearts, our minds, our eyes and our ears open – so we are ready to receive him with **great joy** (10), as the angel said.