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The past four Sundays we explored four Advent themes: Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace. Over two communion Sundays we also explored Jesus the Bread of Life and Jesus the Bread of Heaven.

Last night, we celebrated Emmanuel, **God With Us**, in the person of Jesus, announced by a band of bewildered, but wildly enthusiastic Shepherds. God chooses people who are willing to be obedient to His call, His message, His plans and His purpose.

What happened on Christmas Day, the morning after the BIG event?!

NOTHING HAPPENED!!

I was present at the birth of both our children and I would not take that experience for anything in the world! I remember visiting Narola in the hospital, the day after Nureen and Ranjeet's birth. It was a different kind of excitement. Holding a clean baby, smelling nice (better than the night before!!), unaware of change in our life that was to cascade upon us!

Christmas Day. The day after the night before. Joseph and Mary were getting the first taste of life as parents; perhaps family visited; perhaps some of the younger children wanted to hold the new baby as they would a doll; perhaps the elders came later in the day to bless the child other than such moments, nothing else happened.

Both Mary and Joseph's emotions swinging between exhaustion and euphoria. And the visit by those smelly shepherds. What was that all about?

Angels singing, they said?! The Angel didn't sing to us. They just spoke with the commanding voices angels have, speaking with the authority of God.

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How did they know about the baby born in Bethlehem?

The Angel did not say anything to us about Bethlehem 10 months ago!
How did they know?

What happened on Christmas Day? No Christmas tree, no presents, no Christmas dinner, no crackers... **nothing happened!**

So what are we doing here this morning?!

We are here to celebrate our past: anyone who believes that Jesus is God's Son who came to destroy the chains of death, knows that God does not hold our past against us. He has wiped the slate clean! As far as the east is from the west, that's how far He has removed any thought of our wrongdoing.

We are here to celebrate our present. Like every birthday, we are here today, to celebrate new life. We are born into a new family when we take the conscious decision to allow God's likeness to be reflected through us. We don't need DNA tests, we don't need family trees, because our family tree has been simplified: God is our Father, Jesus His Son, takes us into a new relationship with God as His **TRUE** sons and daughters.

And we are here to celebrate our future. Jesus has cracked open the door which held us back from eternal life with God, and the Holy Spirit is our body guard, making sure we are kept safe and presentable to our Father in Heaven.

What happened on the first Christmas Day - actually nothing happened. But like all birthdays, we celebrate that life every year, and that's what happens on Christmas Day, after the first Christmas Day.

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How will you celebrate Christmas Day, today? Most certainly, enjoy the meal you have prepared or you will share, because that is God's bountiful blessing to you.

Most certainly enjoy the exchange of gifts and presents, because it brings joy that someone thinks of you and cares and loves you enough to buy and give you something.

Most certainly, at the end of the day, collapse into your sofa or onto your bed and reminisce God's blessings of family and friends who made the day enjoyable.

But sometime during the day, consider the difficulty a young couple had to endure to give birth to "the Saviour of the world"! Consider the mother's suffering whose baby grew up to be a young adult and suffered a horrible end as He surrendered His life, not in defeat to death, but to defeat death.

It does make sense, but only if your spend time to consider it!

AMEN