

**SERMON FOR CHRISTMAS 2025: GEOFF CHADWICK**  
**MTT 1:18-25**  
**ALWAYS WINTER, NEVER CHRISTMAS**

**18** Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

**19** Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

**20** But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

**21** She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

**22** All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

**23** "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

**24** When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife,

**25** but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

(Mtt 1:18-25, NRSV)

*"It is winter in Narnia," said Mr. Tumnus, "and has been for ever so long.... always winter, but never Christmas."*

(Lewis, CS, 1956, *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Collins London pp116 &118

If you are a fan of CS Lewis' "*Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*" you will be familiar with these words.

Young Lucy who stumbles, though the back of a mysterious wardrobe, discovers the parallel frozen world of Narnia.

Mt Tumnus, a Faun, explains to her that since the Witch has taken over Narnia, it has been

*"always winter, but never Christmas."*

There begins an adventure to re-instate Narnia's original garden-like character. The power of Aslan the Lion is needed, but he hasn't been seen for a long time either. Aslan, if you know the book represents Christ.

Now it seems to me that the secular world has tuned Christmas into winter! Aslan hasn't been seen for a very long time!

All the songs about snow, the appearance of Frosty the Snowman and certain fascination about the North Pole – which all seems out of place in our Australian context- have "snowed out" the religious aspects of Christmas.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not anti-Father Christmas etc- but I am saddened, that as far as I can tell, the commercial world has managed to completely secularize the festival. I've seen no carols of the Nativity on TV, but I've seen plenty of advertisements for feasting and being with "happy" families.

(On the other hand, I will say that my favourite Radio Station, not of the commercial type, does play plenty of fine sacred Christmas music at this time of the year!)

*"... always winter, but never Christmas"*

And so, I issue a challenge to all people of faith; and I issue the same challenge to all institutions founded on faith to:

**Thaw out the winter snow!**

**We have the birth of the Saviour to proclaim!**

This is not some "fluffy" story of feasting happy families! This is the story of a bemused, young couple, living in a world fraught with great danger, choosing to be faithful to the challenges of God.

May and Josheph are terrified. Being pregnant before marriage, in punishable by stoning. Joseph's righteous reputation is at risk, and the couple's world is in upheaval!

Yet, in all of this, they faithfully follow the calming, yet terrifying instructions of the angel:

*"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.*

**21** *She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."* (Mtt1: 20-21, NRSV)

This may be hard for us to understand, but these events took place at a time when there were high expectations that significant person of God would be born- the *one* who would be the "Saviour".

This is so much more than feasting and happy families. So often I hear people say (especially TV commentators at Christmas events) that feasting with happy families is *the true Spirit of Christmas*. I also hear comments like "*Christmas is for the children*".

I hear this and I want to cry out,

*"Yes feasting with happy families is good. And yes, delighted children are a blessing, but these are not the true spirit of Christmas. We feast and enjoy our families because of the work of the Holy Spirit."*

The true Spirit is the Holy Spirit, who in ways we don't understand conceived a new world order in the womb of a young, faithful yet fragile woman. It is the Holy Spirit who calls a young righteous man – Joseph to a holy purpose- to raise the child who would be the Saviour of all!

This is the true Spirit of Christmas and it's a reminder that there still are young, righteous and fragile people in our world, who through their own bravery, and faithfulness are living examples of God's holy purpose!

We feast, not simply to celebrate.

We feast to celebrate Mary and Joseph's world changing faithfulness.

We gather as "happy families (if we can)" not simply to "catch up", but to remember **that** simple family who changed the course of history for the better!

*...Always winter.. Never Christmas.*

Well let's melt some snow, let's defrost some ice!

And in our own small, humble and faithful ways proclaim that **the Saviour of the world has been born!**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

