

**TALK AT 11.00 AM FAMILY COMMUNION (CW)
AT CHRIST CHURCH, TOTLAND BAY ON
MONDAY 25TH DECEMBER 2017 (CHRISTMAS
DAY) BY JAMES COOK**

**Readings: Isaiah 52.7-10, Hebrews 1.1-12 and John
1.1-14**

Title: ‘No Longer Just Plodding’

Aim: To encourage us to carry the good news of Jesus.

Do you walk slowly or quickly? Do you walk directly,
following a straight line, or do you wander about rather?

To walk, we need our minds to tell us where to go, and we
need our feet to go in the right direction.

What are your feet like? Are they beautiful? If you are
very young, they probably are. When we are older, our
feet don't look so good, and they are inclined to hurt.

In our first Bible reading, the prophet Isaiah said this:

How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,

who say to Zion,
‘Your God reigns!’¹

It doesn’t matter how old we are, if we bring good news to other people, then God says that our feet are beautiful.

What is the good news that we have to share with other people today? [Jesus]

In one of the Bible stories that we hear at Christmas, from the Gospel of Luke, we read that an angel, a messenger from God, said:

‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.’²

What was the good news that the angel brought? [Jesus]

Because we think angels travelling very fast from God to us here on earth, we imagine them with wings, but it seems that they also have beautiful feet.

What do you think about that?

¹ Isaiah 52.7.

² Luke 2.10b-12.

In our second Bible reading for today, we learn that there is someone much more important than angels. The writer to the Hebrews says:

‘So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.’³

If someone is ‘superior’, they are more senior, more important than those who are ‘inferior’ to them.

Who do you think is superior to the angels, who are God’s messengers? [Jesus]

The writer to the Hebrews is talking about God’s Son. He says:

‘And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says,
‘Let all God’s angels worship him.’’⁴

Who is God’s Son, his firstborn? [Jesus]

In our third Bible reading this morning, we learn more about Jesus, God’s only Son, whose birth we celebrate today:

³ Hebrews 1.4.

⁴ Hebrews 1.6.

- We learn that Jesus is in very nature God. As such, John describes him as ‘the Word’.
- The Word, as John says, was with God from the very beginning: he was not created by God, like angels or human beings.
- The Son of God is life and light; and he brings that life and light to human beings: to you and me.
- If we receive the Son of God – his light and his life – into our lives, we too become children of God.
- When we see Jesus, we see the glory of God. We experience God’s ‘grace’ – his love for us, which we don’t deserve, and we experience God’ truth – all his righteousness.

Anyone who brings all this good news has beautiful feet!

Now I’m going to tell you about someone who has beautiful feet. His name is Ned. In fact, why don’t I introduce Ned and ask him to tell you the story about how he learned that his feet are beautiful? [Ned the donkey is introduced.]

Hello. When I walk, I walk very slowly and carefully.

All donkeys, as far as I know, walk slowly and carefully. We don’t like to be hurried. Some people say that we plod.

People and animals who plod are not usually thought to have beautiful feet, but this is how it happened for me.

My home was in Nazareth, and my job was to carry people and goods up and down the hills in and around Nazareth. I would walk very slowly and carefully, making sure that nothing and nobody would fall off.

“Here comes Ned the plodder,” everyone would say. Nobody minded, though, because they knew they would be safe with me.

One day I was given the job of carrying a young woman all the way from Nazareth to Bethlehem, known as the town of David. She was called Mary and she was expecting a baby, which meant she was extra heavy. I didn't mind, though, because I am young and strong.

It took several days to reach Bethlehem. Joseph, who was looking after Mary, made sure that we always took the right road.

When we reached Bethlehem, we were all very tired. Mary and Joseph must have wanted a comfortable room in a hotel, but the hotels or inns, as they are called, were all fully booked. The only place to stay was a stable, though I didn't mind for myself. I'm used to stables, so I was soon fast asleep.

I was woken by the sound of crying: Mary's baby had been born! He and was wrapped in cloths and lying in the manger. At first I was a bit put out, because the manger contained the hay that I had hoped to eat, but I decided not to mind.

Soon shepherds came in to see the baby, and everyone was very excited. This was, it seems, a very special baby. An angel, God's messenger, had told the shepherds that he was Good News and would bring great joy, because he was the Saviour, the Messiah. Jesus was chosen to save people from the power of sin.

Just think: I, Ned the plodder, had carried the best ever Good News for the whole world. Mary and Joseph said that I should now be called 'Ned with the beautiful feet'.

Don't you agree?