

Outreach Posters

December 2014

Does your non-white Christmas feel a bit B grade? Do prawns for Christmas lunch feel more like a cultural experiment than real tradition? It may be that centuries of European fairy tales or the middle class American dream are undercutting your confidence in the goodness of a hot, sweaty December. Well... push those feelings away and embrace the heat!

Think about it. Would you rather play cricket on the beach and frolic in the surf... Or struggle with salt and shovel on a snowy driveway getting your frozen car out of the garage? Would you rather wear thongs and board shorts or layers of thermals? No need to answer.

Yet, there's something about a white Christmas. And it's got everything to do with what Christmas is all about. Before Jesus was born, an angel visited Joseph and declared to him that his wife, Mary, would:

"...bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

This is why Jesus came and what we celebrate at Christmas. God's promise is that for every person casting their hope on Jesus, they will be cleansed from their sin.

Seven hundred years before Jesus came, God spoke critically to the people of that time about their sin. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah he challenged them to 'make themselves clean' and to 'remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes.'



But sin is hard to remove. Envy, greed, pride, lust (and everything else we're not proud of) are like grass stains on white cotton. Nevertheless Isaiah spoke of a time when sins that were 'like scarlet' would be 'white as snow'. In other words clean! This beautiful picture is what we all need. The same prophet told the story of a suffering servant who would one day come and be 'pierced for our transgressions' and 'crushed for our iniquities'. He was speaking of Jesus who took our punishment for us on the cross so we can be spotless and forgiven.

So, embrace a white Christmas. And, as you relax by the pool, don't forget to celebrate the birth of God's son who came to earth to make us clean - whiter than snow.

Prayer: Dear God, please help me to know how clean I can really be through Jesus.

Verse: *"Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool."* Isaiah. 1:18