Christmas Day 2019 Luke 2

**May I speak in the name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes, **but little Lord Jesus no crying he makes. …**
Silent night, holy night … all is calm…. Seriously?! Not in my house it isn’t. and it hasn’t been for several days….. 😊

There is a rant here that has been brewing for a little while. Ever since I first started hearing Christmas carols sung. Probably sometime back in November.

Those writers of carols have got a lot to answer for: why make it so fluffy and Instagram-perfect? Because we aren’t capable of knowing what life is really like? And was always like? Because we have to see God as somewhere so far above us as to be out of sight? What utter nonsense.

If we only look at this story that Luke has told, we can see what claptrap it is. We’ve got the Emperor Augustus sending out decrees and inconveniencing people left right and centre, without a thought or a care about how they would do it – how old people, or pregnant women or anyone else would travel to do his bidding.

And some women – doubtless not just this one that we are particularly concerned with in this story – were so heavily pregnant that they had to give birth away from their homes and friends. Imagine doing that in an Airbnb. Or since there were no Airbnbs available, in a stable.

Imagine a bunch of shepherds – probably never been to school – having an angel appear to them. There on the hillside, right where they were doing their jobs, minding sheep, seeing wolves and things off, living rough and moving from place to place. Yet so plausible that the shepherds up-sticks, abandon the sheep and go to find this thing that the angels have told them about.

And when they got there: imagine the stable – it smells of poo already and now it smells of sweaty traveller and unwashed shepherd too. And blood. She’s just given birth. The animals are shuffling round in a space too small for them as well as the humans – and chomping their food or snoring or bleating and mooing and whatever else. The cock that crowed when Peter denied Jesus at the other end of his life may well have been adding to the general mayhem.

And now try to tell me that the little Lord Jesus wasn’t crying, that everywhere was calm and peaceful. It wasn’t. And it still isn’t. Jesus was born a proper human, in poor and limited circumstances. So Jesus knew and knows all the stuff and the mess and the noise that makes up our lives too.

Don’t feed us sanitised fairy stories of a distant and disinterested God. Tell us the story of a God who knows exactly what it is like to be human. Who came among us in order to know us – and despite all the mess and the noise and the unpleasantness of humanity, still loved us enough to die for us.

This is the baby whose birth we are celebrating today. H*e was little, weak and helpless – tears (and smiles) like us he knew - with the poor. And mean. And lowly. Lived on earth our Saviour holy.*

Thank God for that. Today and every day. 😊

**Amen**