

Theme: The shepherds, who were often despised, receive the Good News of Christ's birth with faith, worshipped Jesus, and shared the Good News with others.

I. A Really Enjoyable Advent

- A. I have really enjoyed this Advent
- B. Decorations, music, readings, prayers have been great!
- C. And I have really enjoyed looking "Through Their Eyes"
- D. Tonight we finish with the shepherds
- E. What do we learn from them?

II. Shepherds - The Unlikely Characters

- A. The shepherds are in the field watching sheep
And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. Luke 2:8
 - 1. A quiet pastoral scene away from city bustle
 - 2. Shepherds out with their sheep away from people
- B. The great angelic visitation
An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.
¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,
¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:9, 13–14
 - 1. Angels full of God's glory burst on this quiet scene
 - 2. The concert of the ages - the King has come!
- C. The humor of who hears this great concert

- 1. Perhaps the greatest song ever sung - angelic choir
 - 2. The concert has been prepared for ages!
 - 3. Not given to stadium full of dignitaries, or Temple full of priests
 - 4. Given to a few smelly, sleepy shepherds on a hillside!
 - 5. Our the surprising ways of our God!
- D. Good news for us!
 - 1. God's message comes to lowly people like us!
 - 2. You do not have to be rich or powerful to find favor with God!
 - 3. We have seen this throughout this series - God comes to the lowly

III. The Shepherds Faith

- A. The shepherds receive the news with faith
When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." Luke 2:15
 - 1. They do not just return to work as usual!
 - 2. They believe the message given to them
- B. We are called to receive the message with faith
 - 1. This is the best news imaginable!
 - 2. We can't just go on with life as before - Christ has come!

3. We are called to respond in faith - believing the Good News!
4. “Turn around and believe that the good news that we are loved is better than we ever dared hope, and that to believe in that good news, to live out of it and toward it, to be in love with that good news, is of all glad things in this world the gladdest thing of all. Amen, and come Lord Jesus.” - Frederic Buechner

IV. The Shepherds Actions

A. The shepherds respond with worship

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. Luke 2:20

1. They can't help but praise and glorify God
2. This Good News calls for worship, praise and glory to be given to God
3. We too are called to respond with praise & worship
4. This is the natural human response to things we love and enjoy
I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. - CS Lewis
5. To not enter into praise and worship diminishes our own joy

B. The shepherds respond by telling others the good news

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Luke 2:17–18

1. The shepherds can't keep this great news to themselves
2. The natural reaction is to tell others
3. Could anyone have kept news of the end of WWII to themselves? NO!!!!
4. We have the greatest news imaginable - and something inside us compels us to share it with others
5. And we may well be surprised to find that others will find joy in it too - just like they did when the shepherds told them
6. And the reason we can have confidence is not in us - any more than it was in the shepherds!
7. Our confidence is in the power of the Gospel itself!
8. It is still the power of God for salvation!

C. Receive the light and pass it on!

Shepherds - Spreading the Good News

Luke 2:8-20
December 24, 2014
Silent Night
Luke 2:10-11

Teaching keywords: Biblical characters, sin, fear, character, leadership, honesty and integrity, miraculous gifts and signs

But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10–11

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. Luke 2:8–20