



The Men of Bethlehem

Meetings at the Manger



The Couplings of Christmas

DECEMBER 6TH, 2015

THE STARTLED SHEPHERDS

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. – Luke 2:8-18 ESV

AT CHRISTMAS THESE TWO MEET

1. LOW MEETS HIGH

God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. – Matthew 5:3 NLT

"Heaven's my throne, earth is my footstool. What sort of house could you build for me? ... I made all this! I own all this!" God's Decree. "But there is something I'm looking for: a person simple and plain, reverently responsive to what I say. – Isaiah 66:1-2 MSG

[God] sets on high those who are lowly. – Job 5:11 ESV

For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar. – Psalm 138:6 ESV

2. FEAR MEETS JOY

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the Lord God among the trees. ⁹ Then the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked." – Genesis 3:8-10 NLT

The joy of the Lord is your strength. – Nehemiah 8:10 ESV

3. WAR MEETS PEACE

“And you, my little son, will be called the prophet of the Most High, because you will prepare the way for the Lord. ⁷⁷ You will tell his people how to find salvation through forgiveness of their sins. ⁷⁸ Because of God’s tender mercy, the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us. ⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide us to the path of peace.” – Luke 1:76-79 NLT

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.... ¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. – Romans 5:1,10 ESV

You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. – Colossians 1:21-22 NLT

4. IDEAL MEETS REAL

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh... – 1 Timothy 3:16 NKJV

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14 NKJV

5. INADMISSABLE MEETS SOLID WITNESS

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. – Acts 1:8 ESV

My Next Steps

- ☐ I Will Memorize: **J ohn 1:14**
- ☐ I will express the joy of Christmas to my neighbors and friends.
- ☐ I will bring the goodness of Christmas to the most disadvantaged and marginalized people around me.
- ☐ I will surrender my life to Christ as Lord and Savior.

WALK THE TALK

A Growth Group Guide For Christmas

Read: Luke 2:8-20

1. When do all the Christmas decorations go up around your house? What is the most family-centered thing you do with your Christmas traditions?
2. If Jesus came today, what group of people would the angels visit to make the first “public announcement”? Why did you pick them?
3. Why do you think Luke sets the opening scene of the first public announcement to shepherds, out in the night sky, keeping watch over their flocks?
4. Go back and read the first chapter of Luke, especially the song of Mary and the song of Zachariah: What clues are given in those songs that point to the circumstances of this night visit to shepherds?
5. Pick one of the titles of Jesus in Luke 2:11. Which one speaks to you the strongest during this holiday season? Explain.
6. How do the actions of the shepherds, after the announcement, reveal to us our responsibility with what we do with what we know about Christmas? About investigating statements of truth? About sharing the story that we’ve come to know personally? About confirming the facts of a story?
7. What precious event has God done that you “treasure up” and “ponder in your heart”?