

## The Shepherds

Luke 2:8-20

Kevin Laser, December 20,2020

Good morning, I want to welcome you to the second part of our Christmas sermon series that we're doing as a church. And I just want to say that I miss each of you, it's difficult to be separated from each other. And we miss having the fellowship together. But we long for the day that we're able to be together again. And despite the restrictions, I hope and wish each of you a Merry Christmas, and hope that you and your family are having a wonderful time celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

When you think of the the Christmas story, there's many parts to it. There's angels that appear to Mary and Joseph. Joseph hears that Mary's pregnant and he considers divorcing her. Wise men see the star off in the distance and they go and get gifts and bring some and worship Jesus. Mary and Joseph, they have to travel afar while she's at the end of her pregnancy. And then they have to find a place to stay to, to be in Bethlehem. And while they're there, she has a baby far from home and far from family and all the comforts that she would normally have. Then Jesus is born and ends up laying in the manger being placed there in that feed trough.

But today we're gonna look at the shepherds. And to understand the significance of this event, we want to remember that just prior to Jesus's birth, there was 400 years of silence from God. He didn't send any prophets, no revelation, no prophecies were given from God. The Old Testament had been written and completed. And many people were probably wondering, what was God up to? It was a time of yearning, a time of anticipation, a time of longing. Many were hoping and anticipating that the Messiah would come and deliver the Jews from their oppressors and to conquer Rome. For 400 years, there was a silence from God, where like I said, there was no new prophecies coming. And they still had the Old Testament, but God stopped sending the prophets to speak to Israel.

Israel had no idea though how long they'd have to wait until they saw the Messiah. All they knew was that God had promised that the Messiah would come. The Messiah was the Anointed One who would come and rescue God's people. The prophecies of Messiah's coming started actually back in Genesis, chapter three, verse 15 when God said of Jesus, to Adam and Eve, He said this, "he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel." You see, Satan's goal was to destroy the Son of God on the cross. And that was like a bruise to the heel. And Jesus's death on the cross was ultimately though, a fatal wound to Satan and his plan. Perhaps the shepherds even talks about these prophecies, as they did their shepherding work, day and night.

In Luke though, we find a massive transition from the 400 years of God's silence to when angels appeared and miracles began happening and ultimately, the Messiah was born. There were years of silent darkness, broken by the light of Christ. The Jews thought that God was primarily for them. And they didn't really grab the vision that God had set for them to be a light to the nations. Later in Luke chapter two, Simeon meets the baby Jesus and he says that Jesus is and I quote, "a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people, Israel." This Jesus, this Messiah, was going to be a light, as the world had never seen before. This was the dawn of a new time in history, where the light of Christ arrived, and it would give light to all of mankind. For 400 years of silence may have felt like darkness, but Jesus's birth was going to burst light of truth to this world like it had never happened before.

I want to ask you to turn to Luke chapter two because we're going to read about the the shepherds this morning. This is the passage that we're going to look at in Luke chapter two, beginning at verse 8 to 20. It says,

In the same region, there was some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior; who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased." When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." So they came in a hurry and they found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Have you ever wondered why God gave the message of Jesus's birth to the shepherds? Why them of all people? Of all the people in the world why the shepherds? Jesus was royalty, God incarnate, coming down from heaven, the King of Heaven himself. Shepherds, though were out in the beautiful pastures, the same hills that King David tended his father's sheep, and at night, they would bring the sheep close together to protect them from the predators. They would take turns keeping watch at night, while some were watching. Others would sleep and get rest for the day. Shepherds were an important part of the Jewish society. And yet they were looked down upon because they were unclean. They were low on the economic ladder, and their job made it difficult for them to abide by and keep the ceremonial law. They were always dealing with dirty, smelly sheep, animals, sometimes dealing with blood from their cuts, dealing with the manure, the flies are buzzed around the animals. They were almost never ceremonially clean and able to come and worship God in the temple. They were considered unreliable and even unfit to testify in courts.

Regardless of this, though, the angels came to the shepherds to give this majestic and cosmic announcement to them. What a contrast, the greatest announcement of all of history to this insignificant group of smelly humble shepherds. The angels were not sent to the priests. They were not sent to royalty. They were not sent to the religious scribes, not even anyone of influence or of esteem in society, they came to a group of nobodies that nobody really cared about much. Shepherds were keenly aware of their position in society, and they were startled. They were surprised, they were amazed. And they're ultimately fearful when the angels came to them that lonely night. It was a fearful encounter with an angel. And when the angel appeared to someone in the Bible, often they were afraid. And even sometimes they were so overcome with the glory of the angel that they would bow down and that they would worship. How is it though, that God would send such a wonderful announcement to such an obscure and lowly shepherd group? I'm sure they were flabbergasted that this amazing message would come to them. From their perspective, they had no reason for why angels would be sent to them. They had no worth. They had no esteem and yet, when the most important announcement in the history of this world was given in all of history, it was delivered to these lowly shepherds on a quiet, lonely night.

Even though these shepherds were a bunch of nobodies in society, they actually had a very important job. You see, in the Old Testament, God established a sacrificial system to deal with people's sins. And because of their transgression against God, there needed to be sacrifices that were offered for their sins. They were to bring sheep to the altar and to offer it as a sacrifice for their sins. And because the ultimate and the final sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was going to be perfect and blemish free, God instructed that these sacrificial sheep also be perfect and blemish free, with no defect. The shepherds were not merely tending sheep to provide for wool and food for the people, the shepherds were destined to have these sheep ultimately go to the sacrificial system.

Although they were looked down on with a bad reputation, the shepherd's job actually had a great importance. You see, at the birth of Jesus, the history of this world would forever be divided into two parts, before Christ and after Christ. Before Christ, people needed to come, often to bring their sacrifices. It happened regularly and ultimately, all the sacrifices could not atone for their sins. Until the death of Christ, there is no sacrifice that atoned for anyone's sins. There was a certain hopelessness, if I could say that, because as you would look out at the landscape of history, there was no sacrifice that atoned. Yet, all the sacrifices on the altar, ultimately pointed to Jesus, who would be that spotless Lamb of God; He was the perfect sacrifice, who died for our sins.

But on the other side of history, was when Jesus came and died on the cross, because He said, these three very important words, "It is finished." In other words, there is no need for any more sacrifices. He was the fulfillment of all that the sacrifices pointed to. His death was the end of the sacrificial system; He fulfilled all that the law required to atone for our sins. And that's the great news that the angel refers to in verse 10, when he says, "I bring you good news of *great* joy, which will be for all the people." All of history is divided into those two parts.

But let's come back to the shepherds. There's three things that we're going to look at this morning, to focus on and I want us to learn about from the shepherds, and that is this. First of all, the shepherds were people of faith, they believed God's word. Secondly, they shared the Good News. They took the gospel, and they shared it with people. And thirdly, they praised and they glorified God. The shepherds are out in the field at night, an angel appears and says to them, that today, a Savior has been born. They're frightened. Can you imagine seeing an angel, like we learned last week? They're majestic, powerful beings. Perhaps the shepherds thought that they would punish them. Or simply, they were fearful of not knowing what the angel was going to do; the fear of the unknown. But angels instead, did the opposite, and they comforted the shepherds. And they told them, don't be afraid, do not fear. They're not in danger of punishment, or something bad happening. In fact, this is the very opposite, something great and cosmic just occurred. And they were the first to get the good news: a Savior of the world was born. First they see one angel, and then a whole multitude of angels. But let's look briefly at the message that they gave the shepherds because it's going to help us understand the response of the shepherds better.

The message has several important things that would stick out in the mind of a Jewish person. There's four things. First of all, this is great news for *all* the people; this news applies to both Israel *and* the Gentiles, which is all the other nations. Secondly, this is the Messiah, Christ, the Lord, that was prophesied about in the Old Testament. You see, for thousands of years, they were anticipating that the Messiah was coming. It was prophesied and now the Messiah was there. Thirdly, the Savior came in the form of a baby, a low, humble, helpless baby. And fourthly, the angels proclaimed peace among men. The Jews were living under the oppression of the Romans and in many ways, there wasn't peace among Israel. They heard this amazing news, the shepherds did, that likely challenged their thinking. And it says in verse 15, it says this,

When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." So they came in a hurry, and they found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as

He lay in the manger.

These shepherds, they were amazed, and they began talking about what they had just seen and heard. They quickly concluded that they needed to go find and see the Savior. They believed the message and had faith that it was true, and they acted on their faith. It says that they went straight to Bethlehem, they went in a hurry. But what about the sheep? How many shepherds were there? We don't know how many there were. But we know that they had to make some sort of a plan to have the sheep still being taken care of while they went to Bethlehem. Maybe they went and got a whole new group of shepherds to replace all of them for the rest of the night. Or maybe they left a skeleton crew there and half of them went to see Jesus and then they swapped places so that they could all see Jesus. We don't know exactly how it happened but we do know that they quickly figured out that God was up to something big.

This was such an important message that God commissioned an angel to personally deliver this message, and then a whole multitude of angels to sing praise to God in unison. These shepherds didn't have much going for them in society, except maybe a smelly, dirty job. Their job was to tend the sheep day and night. They lived mostly out in the fields, and even slept out there to protect the sheep. But you see, from God's perspective, they did have this going for them; when they heard the message, they acted in faith. They believed the message and did what they could to go and see baby Jesus. You see, they were actually not commanded to go find Jesus but being wise and faithful they did.

This though, contrasts with Zacharias in Luke chapter one, who was visited by an angel named Gabriel. Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth couldn't have children, she was barren. And they prayed to God and asked for a child. And Gabriel came and told them, that Elizabeth would give birth to a son and that he would be great in the sight of God. But because of their old age, Zacharias didn't believe and therefore God made him mute for many, many months. The shepherds did believe, though, and they told many people of what the angel told them. You see, Zacharias doubted God's words, and didn't think that they were altogether true. Perhaps he believed part of it, or perhaps none of it. Perhaps, though he had fallen to discouragement that he and Elizabeth were childless, and he had lost all hope. Sadly, he didn't believe God's message, but thought that something about it would be impossible. He lost focus on the fact that when God gives a message, even if it seems impossible, even if we can't fathom it, it should be believed, because nothing is impossible with God. You see, the shepherds are a beautiful picture of someone hearing God's word, which may seem impossible in many ways, but still believing it.

Let's take a look, though at the message again, a little deeper. And I want to suggest to you that they easily could have found several reasons to not fully believe the message that the angel gave to them. First, this great news is for *all* the people. This news is not limited to Israel, but applies to all mankind. Many of the Jews would have scoffed at this idea that the Savior or a Messiah was going to come for the non-Jews, us Gentiles. That would have cracked the limit of their thinking. The Jews thought that salvation was for the most part, exclusive to the Jew, exclusive to Israel. They were the ones who received the Law. It was the written word and, and salvation was limited to them. They were the Chosen Ones. And there were obviously exceptions where God brought in a Gentile but salvation for the Gentile was not seen as the norm. To think that this news is for all the people of the world that would have required a new perspective, an entirely new way of thinking.

Second, *this* is Christ, the Messiah, that was prophesied and anticipated. For hundreds of years, they anticipated that the Messiah would come and save His people. This was the Messiah, the Anointed One, who would come and deliver Israel from their oppressors. Could this truly be him? Would the Messiah not come with majesty, grandeur and splendor, but the Messiah coming helpless as a lowly babe? Surely even if this is the Messiah, he wouldn't come as a baby now, would He? Many would have scoffed at the idea that God's Anointed, the Messiah would

come as a lowly babe. That was the sort of skepticism that many Jews had. A first century Jew named Rabbin Yohanan ben Zakkai, that's a fun one to say, who lived after the death and the resurrection of Christ actually once said this, he said, "If you should happen to be holding a sapling in your hand, when they tell you that the Messiah has arrived, first plant the sapling, and then go out and greet the Messiah." You see, this skepticism was common among the Jews.

Thirdly, that the angels proclaimed peace among men. The Jews were living under oppression of the Romans and in many ways, there wasn't peace among Israel at that time. And the question would have come up, how would a baby bring peace? Many would have rejected this message because they didn't think that the baby could bring peace between Israel and the Romans. But what many didn't know and many didn't understand, at least in the beginning was that this peace speaks of being reconciled with God. These are some of the questions and objections though that people would have had and often, they were stumbling blocks to the people who didn't believe.

The shepherds fully believed, and went quickly and hurried to find the baby Jesus. They were in a rush and they found a way to abandon their job and come and worship Jesus. They were determined to see Jesus, the child, and to worship Him, and nothing was going to stop them. Though they surely had many questions and this didn't really fit into their mold of how the Messiah would come, they believed this message, and that it was from the Lord. There may have even been one or two other babies recently born in Bethlehem, but there was only one that was lying in the manger. And that was the sign that this Jesus was the Messiah. When they saw Jesus in the manger, just like the angel said, their belief was confirmed.

Our first point that we've just been looking at, is that the shepherds wholeheartedly believed the message. They had faith in God's message, *all* of the message. The second point is that the shepherds shared the Good News. In Luke chapter two, verses 17 to 18. It says this,

When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered the things which were told to them by the shepherds.

The shepherds are a great example for us to actually learn from, because as an outflow of their faith, they went and they shared their message, the message of salvation, the message of Good News, a Savior had been born, with others. They wanted to be involved in God's work and to see what God was doing. They dropped everything, to go and see Jesus. When they arrived at the manger scene, it must have been interesting to see and hear the interactions and the conversation between Mary and Joseph and the shepherds. Shepherds, you see, already had a stigma attached to them as not being a reliable witness in the court. So who would believe them? Would Mary and Joseph believe that these angels had come and said that this is a Savior? And maybe Mary and Joseph hesitated to listen to them because they were maybe already biased against these shepherds because of what they had learned in their society. However, maybe they, being Joseph and Mary, remembered that Mary had a stigma attached to her, that she got pregnant without Joseph and Joseph married someone who appeared to be unfaithful. And in some ways, both the shepherds and Mary and Joseph, were not highly esteemed. And maybe that actually gave them some unspoken common ground, that maybe made it easier to talk and share their stories. However it went, we don't know but we know that the shepherds shared with them about their angelic encounter. And Mary and Joseph may have also shared their stories of when they were visited by the angels.

As they talked, they probably began to put the pieces together. Maybe the shepherds shared first about how the angels had said that this baby is a Savior, Christ the Lord. They would have known the prophecies that God had

said about the Messiah and the sign of Jesus in the manger, perhaps they shared about that. It was just like the angel said. Joseph probably remembered that an angel told him that Jesus, and I quote, “will save His people from all their sins” end of quote, and maybe they discussed how it was that He would end up saving them from sins. How would that happen? I'm sure they were trying to figure that out. Mary may have piped up and shared that the angel told her that Jesus would sit on the throne of David, that He would reign over Israel and that His kingdom would have no end. For Mary the message focused more on Jesus' sovereignty and rule and that His kingdom would have no end. For Joseph and the shepherds it seemed that the message focused a little bit more on Jesus being the Savior.

These shepherds, though they were filled with awe and excitement, they left and they went back to their friends and their family. They simply had to share what they saw and heard. The message just oozed out of them. Sharing the message was as natural as a fig tree growing in Israel. These were the first evangelists who proclaimed who Jesus was. They shared the Good News from the angels, to Mary and Joseph, that this is the child and the manger. That He is the Savior. That He is the Christ. That He is the Lord. That He is the one that the angels from heaven spoke about. I believe this was part of their conversation as they awkwardly yet eagerly probably got to know each other. The shepherds were humble of hearts to receive God's word. They heard it. They believed it. And they were changed by it. And we see in verse 18, that they shared the message of angels with many who wondered about it. In verse 18 it says that all who heard what the shepherds shared, wondered. There are two ways that people can wonder about things.

I want to focus on this word “wonder” for a moment. Some people wondered with mere curiosity. They wanted to know; they wanted to understand what was happening. They were only plainly interested with no truly vested interest. They want it to be in on the latest news, and for some of those people what juicier news would there be than a scandalous birth of a child who is being hailed as Christ the Lord? They wondered, yet scoffed at such a claim. Perhaps this is what their scoffing sounded like: What good could come out of Nazareth? How could the Savior of the world be born in such low and despised and humble circumstance? God wouldn't send the Messiah to be born to a young woman who is unfaithful and became pregnant before her marriage now, would he? Yes, God forgives all of our terrible sins, but really from a woman who has rumors like that flying around her? And even Joseph, couldn't he find a woman who was of better standing? End quote. Well, you see, many wondered with skepticism, and didn't take to heart the message of the angels. They wondered, with an unbelieving, distant heart.

But others, they wondered with awe; they wondered with reverence at his birth. Many marveled at the fact that Jesus was conceived not by man, but by the Holy Spirit. It was a miraculous birth. It needed to be that way because it was God incarnate, meaning God born in the flesh, come in the flesh. It was Emmanuel, God with us. Many faithful Jews knew what the Old Testament said and maybe some of them remembered what it said in Isaiah 43 verse 11, where it says this,

“I, even I am the Lord, and there is no savior besides Me.”

That was Yahweh speaking and now this baby in the manger is being proclaimed by the angels as the Savior, and calling him Christ the Lord. These who wondered would do so with a heart that embraces the message of the angels. They can't fathom all of this, but they believe it, recognizing it to be true. Mary pondered these things in her heart and she treasured these events and messages, and she reflected on them. Though she was young and trying to understand what was happening to her and around her, she had a heart that meditated upon God's word, and truly sought to understand it.

You see, friends, we have a message, a message of the gospel that we need to share as well. And God put us in this time of history to proclaim and share the Good News that a Savior has been born. Look around at your friends, your neighbours, your colleagues. There's a fear that has gripped the world, hasn't it? And God is acutely reminding us that life is short. Did you know that within the last 24 hours over 150,000 people in this world have died? And since in Canada, we've had the restrictions with this pandemic, over 45 million people have died in this world. And God wants to awaken us to see that they need to be reconciled, the world needs to be reconciled before Him, before it's too late and their fate is sealed.

You and I have God's word. It's a light for the nations. I have a question for you and that is what are we doing with the gospel? Do we see the infinite value of it? Do we grasp the depth and the reality of its transforming power? Paul says in Romans one chapter 16,

For I'm not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile.

The gospel is also completely transforming a soul completely transforming sorry that Jesus says that unless you are born again, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. You see, the message of Christmas is profound. It begins with God who, before time began, determined that the Son of God, the second person in the Trinity would humble Himself and be born to Mary. The Holy Spirit conceived Jesus and Mary. Jesus, being God incarnate, lived a perfect human life, which was necessary so that when we believe, that we would be credited with His righteousness. And it was also predestined by God that Jesus would die for the sins of mankind. We were dead in our sins, with no hope of any salvation. Our righteousness is like filthy rags it says in Isaiah, and throughout all of history, no sacrifice, or a multitude of sacrifices, atoned for our sins. But God, being rich in mercy showed us such great love that He sent His only son, His only begotten son, Jesus, to die on that gruesome cross, which then satisfied the wrath of God. The good news is that Jesus left the glories and splendor of heaven and He came and humbled Himself to live on this earth, and to take care of our greatest problem, our sin.

We look around this world, and we see that the virus is killing people. And yet, that is not our biggest problem. That is not the greatest problem that we face. Like Quentin said last week, let's not be distracted, but keep focused on the things that are eternal. Are we stepping out and sharing the Good News? Are we motivated by love for Christ, to take this saving message to our friends, our neighbours, our relatives, our colleagues? Where is the burden for the lost? Or are we consumed with the pleasures and trinkets and comforts that we have in this world? You see, we have a rich treasure called the gospel and Jesus says that the fields are ripe unto harvest, we need to be busy sharing the gospel. We need to make disciples of all nations, many of them that have already arrived in our country.

But the third point that I want to look at today is the fact that the shepherds glorified and praised God. Whatever happened to the shepherds? What did they go and do after visiting the baby Jesus? Well, verse 20 tells us and it says this. It says,

The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had seen and heard, just as had been told them.

They went and they talked with their friends and their family about what they had seen and heard. They were filled with excitement. Not only had they seen the angels and seen this sneak peek of heaven by seeing them, but they received a message from the angels that would change the course of history. Their hearts were filled with praise and filled with worship for what God was doing among them. What does it mean though, to glorify God? It

means to extol, to magnify, to celebrate, to honour and to hold in honour, to impart and to make something glorious, to acknowledge the dignity of something and the worth of something or someone. It is to ascribe worship and reference which is due to someone. It begins though ultimately in the heart, in the attitude of our heart, and it is then expressed with our words and our actions. You see, the shepherds, they had faith in God, and they glorified God for being true to His word, and sending the Messiah. The message of the angels was true and the prophecies of the Old Testament were being fulfilled right before their eyes. Their response glorified God. In other words, they spoke highly of His worth. It put the focus on God, and what He was doing. You see, they were not consumed with a focus on the angels and being distracted by that, as tempting as that may have been. They didn't capitalize on it, and try to profit from that or change their status in society by the fact that they had seen angels or had received this message. Their response was beautifully simple. They shared the angels' message about the Savior and gave Him glory and worshiped Him.

Their message, though, was controversial, and no doubt many cast doubt on them and their statements, and they ridiculed them. When Jesus posed the question to Peter, in Matthew chapter 16, verse 15, when he says, "Who do you say that I am?" that was not a new question. The shepherds would have experienced that right from the beginning. Who was this Jesus that was born in the manger? Was He the Messiah? Is He the Savior? Is this God from heaven coming down to live among man? But the shepherds had a submissive heart and they received God's word. They received it in faith. Their response was not of questioning, or seeking to debate the message because they couldn't fully understand it or grasp it. They didn't focus on what they couldn't understand and let that be a stumbling block. They didn't say, "Well, this is confusing, and therefore, it cannot be possible. There's prophecies of the Messiah being great and what's great about this baby? This baby cannot be the Savior, the Anointed One, the Messiah. He could never lower himself, the Messiah to come as a helpless baby. This could not even be the Savior, only God is the Savior." You see, although they had endless questions and things that confused them and things they just couldn't quite fit together, their response was to accept God's word, and to worship Him. It was a beautiful response and it required one thing, a child like faith. They glorified and they praised God for what they had seen and what they had heard, just as it had been told them.

And we know from the Gospels that Jesus was widely rejected. Most Jews had a preconceived notion of what the Messiah would be like and what he would do and Jesus didn't fit that mold. It would have been the same with the angels' message about baby Jesus. The message was so different than what the Jewish religious leaders believed, even though many wondered with curiosity about His birth, most rejected, that this little baby is the Savior of mankind, God from heaven, whom we should worship. The shepherds did not change the angels' message about Jesus to accommodate anybody's doubts, preconceptions or personal interpretation of Scripture. It says that they were glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them. These shepherds were faithful to God and His Word. They were honest and they stayed true to what they had seen and what they had heard. Any argument or mockery that they faced or experienced, was simply part of the price of worshipping Jesus. They were bold, and they shared the message to anyone who would listen.

So, in conclusion, I want to ask you some questions. This Christmas, when you hear the Christmas story, and you read the Christmas story, and you think about what the angels said; you think about the angelic message, are you going to have a childlike faith and embrace it and believe it to be true? We all wonder, don't we at Jesus' birth but my question is, how are you going to wonder? Are you going to wonder with disbelief and distance? Or are you going to wonder with reverence and faith? Are you going to be like the shepherds and share this Good News? That there is peace with God through the atoning work of Jesus on the cross? Do you see the fields as ripe unto harvest as Jesus taught? What will your attitude be toward the angels' message? Does the birth of Jesus from heaven compel you to worship and glorify Him like the shepherds? I pray that it does.

Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we are humbled that You sent Your only begotten Son, the second person of the Trinity to come and to be born as a lowly babe on this earth, to have humbled Himself so greatly, that ultimately, He would die on the cross for the joy that is set before Him, that we might be saved. Father, I pray that we would respond like the shepherds did, that we would believe Your message, we would believe Your truth, we would have faith that is unswerving. I pray that we would be people who share the message, may we not shrink from the opportunities that we have but I pray that we would grab the opportunities, we would seek opportunities to share the gospel, especially at this Christmas season, Lord, when Christmas is on people's minds, especially Lord at this season, when we're in a pandemic, and people have questions and there's a certain unsettledness about this world, and people are wondering what's going on? I pray that we would remind them about the great Savior, who came to solve our greatest problem. And I pray Father, that we would respond with faith, worshipping You and giving You glory, that we would ponder and wonder at the great event that happened when Jesus came. I pray Father, that we would be people that are filled with worship, and that we would give You much glory. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

May God bless you during this Christmas season. Merry Christmas!