



SERMON STUDY GUIDE

“LUKE 2:1-20”

CONNECT

How did last week's passage we read/discussed affect your week?

DISCOVER

LUKE 2:1-20 In one of the darkest times in history, when the Jewish people had been oppressed or persecuted or enslaved for generations, the Light PIERCED the darkness! Jesus contained His divinity into human form and stepped into our world. The Messiah had come – for ALL THE PEOPLE! Emmanuel, God with us – ALL of us – Hallelujah! But the arrival of the Messiah was first announced to the lowliest of the low – shepherds. Shepherds who were nomads...shepherds who had no civil rights...shepherds who couldn't walk into the temple...shepherds who were considered to be 'the least of these'....shepherds on the night watch.... Why shepherds?

WHY SHEPHERDS? Jason gave us a reason why the shepherds were the first to hear the news of Jesus' birth – Jesus came for ALL THE PEOPLE! And while his parents lived in Nazareth, Jesus was BORN in Bethlehem - why the long journey for Mary and Joseph?

- Why do you suppose God chose this point in all of time to send His Son into the world? Why in Bethlehem? (Other than that it was a great city to write a beautiful Christmas carol about – can you imagine singing, “O Little Town of Nazareth”?) Why to an unwed Mary and a bewildered Joseph? Why the long journey?
- The innkeeper turned them away! He turned away the Savior of the world! Yet, read Matthew 25:40; have you ever, in the busy-ness of Christmastime, shut the door in the face of Jesus? Perhaps turned away someone who was the representation of Jesus?
- And why WERE the shepherds the first to hear? Do you think God was SCREAMING a message to the world? What was the fullness of that message, and how has the world been reacting and responding to that message for the last 2000 years?

THE SHEPHERDS' REACTION: FEAR! They were TERRIFIED! How would ANY of us react if we were approached by an angel, with the GLORY OF THE LORD shining around? Luke 2:8 tells us these shepherds were living out in the fields and were on the night watch; they were accustomed to seeing the night sky and hearing the bleating sounds of their sheep!

- What would you imagine that scene looked like? What would an angel's voice SOUND like? Moreover, what would the GLORY of God LOOK like? Can you even imagine it?
- How does verse 10 show us God's purpose in the declaration of Jesus' birth? How often have you read over that verse and missed the importance of the last three words of that verse? Do you see that verse any differently after hearing today's message?
- Is there anything in your world that you have considered is ALL you need? Have you talked with someone who thinks they have ALL they need? What stands in the way, in each case, of seeing that the ONLY thing that you/they truly need is JESUS?

THE SHEPHERDS' RESPONSE: Read Vs. 11-16

- Did the angels TELL the shepherds to go see the baby lying in a manger? Who made the choice to go to Bethlehem, and HOW did they go?
- Have you ever experienced hearing news of something that caused you to drop everything you were responsible for, everything you knew, to go somewhere to see _____? What might it take for something to cause you to do that?
- The shepherds' identities were wrapped up in those sheep! Those sheep were their world! Yet they WENT. What false identity in the world are you unwilling to LEAVE to see the Savior of the world? What is holding you back?



SERMON STUDY GUIDE CONT.

THE SHEPHERDS' RESOLVE: Read Vs. 17 and 20. What was the IMMEDIATE reaction of the shepherds, once they had seen the Savior of the world?

- Are the shepherds your role model after you heard today's message and studied the passage? The shepherds did not hesitate to go to the manger – they felt welcome. How welcome do you feel at our church or at other churches you visit? How important IS that to you?
- Vs. 20 is a model for each of us – how have you been glorifying and praising God for all you have seen Him do in your life and the lives of those around you?
- How could you be a good shepherd this week as you love God and love ON people?

RESPOND

- How does this passage encourage you, challenge you, or change you in your efforts to become more like Jesus?
- What is one thing you learned about yourself from God's Word? How will you respond in obedience this week?
- Who is someone you can have a conversation with about what Jesus is doing in your life or invite to join you at a CU Church gathering.

PRAY

... for each other and spend time praising God. Pray that he will show you how to better love God and love people.