

Reedy Fork Baptist Church

Wednesday, December 6, 2023

BIBLE STUDY – “Telling the Good News”

SCRIPTURE – Luke 2:8-14 NIV

“⁸ 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 that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, 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 heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

I. Background:

- The Christmas story as told by Luke offers not only good news, but the best news in the world:
“The angel told the shepherds, ‘I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord’ (Luke 2:10-11).
- The best news in the world is that Christ the Lord has come as the Savior for all.
- “To be honest, this story doesn’t touch the pain I feel or the tragedy I struggle with on a daily basis.”
- But if you’re thinking that, you don’t understand the significance of this news as it relates to you personally.
- The news that “there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord,” is absolutely the best news there is or ever could be.

II. In Depth:

1. Lesson Emphasis #1: This is the best news because it centers on the most unique Person in history.

A. JESUS THE CHRIST

- The word is Greek for “anointed one” (the Hebrew is “Messiah”).
- It means that Jesus is the one sent and anointed by God the Father for His mission of salvation.
- He was anointed as a prophet to preach the gospel, as priest to offer Himself as the sacrifice for our sins, and as King to reign.
- He alone is able to reconcile sinful people to God through His sinless life, sacrificial death and resurrection.

B. JESUS THE LORD

- The same word is used in verses 9, 22, and 23 to refer to Jehovah God.

- What a mystery, yet true: The Savior born in Bethlehem is God in human flesh.
- If He had been only a man, He could not have died for the sins of the human race.
- If He had been an angel, He could not have borne human sins.
- But He was Christ the Lord, God! God alone is great enough to deal with our sins.

C. JESUS IS A MAN

- He was born in Bethlehem.
- He didn't descend from the sky fully grown.
- He was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb and went through the stages of development just like any other human baby.
- What a wonder!
- As a man, the representative Man, He could bear the sins of the human race.
- As God in human flesh, Jesus Christ is unique in all the world.
- He alone qualifies to be the Savior of the world.
- If you doubt the uniqueness of Jesus, I invite you to read the Gospel accounts with an open heart, and you will be convinced that He can be nothing other than fully God and fully man united in one person.
- That makes the news He brings about salvation the best news in the world, "good news of great joy."

2. Lesson Emphasis #2: This is the best news because of the type of news it is.

A. IT IS THE BEST NEWS BECAUSE IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT NEWS IN THE WORLD.

- Jesus did not come as a nice man offering a new philosophy about life.
- He did not come as a great moral teacher, giving some interesting tips and helpful insights on how to live a happy life.
- He came as the Savior!
- The only people who need a Savior are those in great peril.
- Even though you may not be aware of it, without Jesus as your Savior, you are lost and under God's judgment!
- That's why the good news that a Savior has been born who is Christ the Lord is the best news in the world, because it deals with the most important issue of all, namely, where a person will spend eternity.
- Each person in this world is lost without the Savior.
- It is only a matter of time until they die without Christ and enter eternity under the judgment of a holy God.
- But in His mercy, God sent Jesus to save us from our sins.

- That is the most important news in the world!
- B. IT IS THE BEST NEWS BECAUSE IT IS TRUE NEWS.
- Good news is only good if it is true.
 - The Christmas story is not a fairy tale.
 - It happened in history: "Today in the city of David there has been born..." (v. 11).
 - It happened on a particular day in history in a geographic location that was prophesied centuries before.
 - The shepherds went and saw a live human baby.
 - We're not talking make-believe; we're talking true history.
 - Luke begins his gospel by telling us that he investigated everything carefully from the beginning (1:3).
 - In verse 20, we're told that the things the shepherds heard, and saw were "just as had been told them."
 - The truth of the narrative is further confirmed by the fulfilled Old Testament prophecies.
 - Luke states that Jesus was born in the city of David.
 - Micah (5:2) had prophesied 700 years before that Bethlehem would be the place of the Messiah's birth.
 - In Luke 1, Zacharias' prophecy shows how the birth of John the Baptist fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy and would be followed by the coming of the Messiah.
 - In Luke 2:29-32, Simeon recognizes that this child fulfills the Old Testament hope for Messiah.
 - In Luke 3, Jesus' lineage is traced back through David, thus fulfilling God's promise to David 1,000 years before.
 - If Jesus is who the prophets predicted, who the angels proclaimed, who He Himself claimed to be, and verified by His miracles, then your eternal destiny depends on your response to Him.
- C. IT IS THE BEST NEWS BECAUSE IT IS TIMELY NEWS.
- News isn't really exciting news if it's old or if it relates to something in the far-distant future.
 - The best news is news that relates to me right now.
 - Notice the words in the story that give a sense of urgency to this message to the shepherds: "today" (v. 11); "Let us go straight to Bethlehem" (v. 15); "they came in haste" (v. 16).
 - The good news about Jesus the Savior is timely, urgent news because it comes to people who, like these shepherds, sit in darkness and the shadow of death (1:79).
 - Scripture implores us, "Now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2). You may not have tomorrow.
 - It's not something to put off for another day.
 - It also promises, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved" (Acts 16:31).

- As many Scriptures show, God saves you the instant you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior.
- No matter how great a mess you've made of your life, if you will turn to Christ as your Savior now, He will save you now.
- If you're putting off trusting in Christ as your Savior, you don't understand your true condition before God.
- To put it bluntly, if you're outside of Christ, you're terminal!
- Thus, the news about Jesus is the best news in the world because it centers on the most unique Person in history, Jesus the Savior, who is Christ the Lord; and, because of the type of news it is: important, true, and timely news. Finally...

3. Lesson Emphasis #3: This is the beset news because it comes to all people.

- The angle announces it as "good news of great joy which shall be for all people" (v. 10).
- No doubt these Jewish shepherds understood that to mean the Jewish people.
- But there is also no doubt that Luke, a Gentile, would have his readers know that "all the people" means that there is no one to whom this good news does not apply.
- It is a fact of history that the good news of Jesus applies to all and transforms all who will believe.
- Shepherds were a despised group in Israel.
- They were not considered fit to be witnesses in court.
- Their work rendered them ceremonially unclean.
- The fact that God chose to reveal the Savior first to these shepherds shows that God often chooses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise.
- He often picks common, working people – shepherds and fishermen – in whom to display His grace.
- The fact that these shepherds were sitting in darkness is symbolic of the whole human race, lost in the darkness of sin (1:79).
- It reminds us that the good news about Christ is only for sinners.
- As He told the self-righteous Pharisees, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).
- The sudden bright light of God's glory terrified the shepherds, as is always the case when sinners encounter the holy light of God's presence.
- But the angel quickly relieved their fears and told them this incredibly good news.
- As John Newton put it in his classic hymn, "Amazing Grace",
*"'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, And grace my fears relieved;
 How precious did that grace appear, The hour I first believed!"*
- But the best part of this good news is not that it is for all people in general, but that it is for you personally: "there has been born for you a Savior" (v. 11).

- That means that this good news requires a personal response.
- Each person must respond as these shepherds did.
- Their faith was demonstrated by their going straight to Bethlehem to see it for themselves and then to return glorifying and praising God (vv. 15, 20).
- What about you?
- Will you scoff or stumble over the simply but profound message that the baby Jesus, born in Bethlehem, whose birth was announced by the angels to these simple shepherds, is Christ the Lord, a Savior born to you?
- That is absolutely the best news in the world, no matter what your situation in life.
- Jesus didn't leave heaven and come to this earth and go through the suffering of the cross just to give you a boost or a few tips on how to have a happy life.
- He knew that you desperately need a Savior.
- He alone can save you from the penalty of God's wrath because of your sins.

III. Make it happen:

1. What is the Good News?

2. Why is it important to tell the Good News?

3. Why is the Good News the best news?

4. How will you respond to Jesus being in your life?

IV. Follow the Spirit:

- What will I do as a result of this lesson?
