

LET GLORIOUS JOY ENTER OUR MUNDANE DAYS AND OUR WATCHFUL NIGHTS Luke 2:8-20

*“It is as though there were a film of familiarity or veil between us and the radiant reality of things.”
Malcolm Guite, Lifting the Veil, p12.*

A. Consider how shepherds shepherded.

1. Shepherds are poor, with little influence.

“Shepherds were generally despised and disparaged in New Testament times by the upper classes of society.... Kenneth Baily. Poet and Peasant and Through Peasant Eyes.

They are unconnected to royalty or genealogy of any other metric of influence.

2. Shepherds are unclean.

There’s dirtiness involved in keeping us clean and fed and warm

3. Shepherds are every-day, every-people, doing their jobs.

We tend to romanticize work that isn’t our own.

Since the curse, there’s an aspect of “grind” to every work.

There’s a fine line between faithful care and mundane duty.

Most shepherds were the youngest members of their families often on the fringe and forgotten or getting in the way.

Shepherds are doing their work as they had done for generations, same old-same old.

Suddenly heaven was to come to earth here on these hills amongst these shepherds.

B. Consider the angels.

1. Angels don’t know everything.

*Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who prophesied about the grace that would come to you, searched and carefully investigated. They inquired into what time or what circumstances the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating when he testified in advance to the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you. These things have now been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—angels long to catch a glimpse of these things.
2 Peter 1:10-12*

They’re wondering how this is going to all play out too.

2. Angels stand in the presence of God.

There is something of God’s presence radiating from beings who have just been in the presence of God.

Glory also speaks to magnificence and majesty and renown. There’s a weight to glory that leaves us in awe. Actually, it’s terrifying.

3. Angels are sent with a message.

God is going to break 400 years of silence by the repeated phrase, "Don't be afraid."

The reason people don't need to be afraid is because the angels are proclaiming good news that is going to bring great joy for all.

Here's the message: Today something is being fulfilled that has been promised from old. The long-awaited prophet, the priest, the king, the snake-crushing seed has come. It's for us. It benefits all the people. It is for these shepherds.

The shepherds will verify the news with a sign: A baby lying in exactly the place God planned: a feeding trough.

C. This message, the encounter between angels and shepherds, starts a chain reaction.

1. Angels react.

God peels back a curtain just a little so we catch a glimpse into heaven breaking through. The angels break out into song and its spontaneous, unconstrained, joy-filled heaven.

The angels are singing a new song.

Psalm 40:3 He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and they will trust in the Lord.

It is the unfolding joy of heaven to find what is lost and delight (Luke 15)

2. Shepherds react.

Imagine the chatter of the shepherds. Let's go see! They hurried off to Bethlehem with urgency and pace. Things were just as they had been told they would be. They weren't disappointed.

So they tell others and begin the history that Luke will refer to again with similar words, "we cannot help but speak of the things we've seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

They are about to watch THE good shepherd, the master shepherd lead them into the presence and fold of God.

3. Mary reacts.

All those who heard their testimony responded with marvel and wonder and amazement.

In contrast, Mary engages in deep, private reflection on what was taking place.

Have you pondered the news of the coming of God and mulled it over? Do you hear this report in ways which bring you joy, to praise and witness? Do you experience glory in ways that you cannot help but express, that causes you to sing? Do these reactions reflect your experience?

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18