

inSIGNIFICANT
The Shepherds Story
Luke 2:8-20

We started a NEW SERIES two weeks ago!

I've titled it, "inSIGNIFICANT"

The subtitle focuses in on what we are going to attempt to realize...

"Decisions that lead to Destinies"

ONE THING

Our daily decisions determine our directions, but our faith decisions determine our destinies!

We began with Mary's Willingness to embrace the call of the Lord to become the mother of Jesus...

Last week we looked at Joseph's Forgiveness...

Today we are going to look at The Shepherd's Story

In this we are going to see how seemingly insignificant people played major roles in the birth story of Jesus!

We are going to take the Shepherds Story and see how we can find through their story the power in our own stories...

1. The Shepherds PERSPECTIVE

Luke 2:8–12 (ESV) — And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

There are several things about this story regarding the shepherds that has puzzled many people through the years...

The first question I believe we need to answer regarding this story is...

Why shepherds?

- ***Why not the Innkeeper...***
- ***Why not their family...***
- ***Why not the Priests in Jerusalem...***

I believe the key to opening the significance of the Shepherds story is found in verse 12...

Luke 2:12 (ESV) — And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

This brings up other questions...

Why swaddling cloths?

- ***Why not a blanket...***
- ***Why not Joseph's outer garment...***

Another question...

Why a manger?

- **Why place the baby in anything?**
- **If all you had was a feeding trough to place your newborn baby in, wouldn't you just hold the baby?**

The KEY question we need to answer is...

Why is this a sign?

- **A sign is something that points to something greater**
- **A sign is an event that has some special meaning**

Why is a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and specifically found lying in a manger A SIGN???

To unlock the importance of this shepherd story we must go to Old Testament prophecy...

Amos 3:7 (ESV) — For the Lord GOD does nothing without revealing his secret to his servants the prophets.

Old Testament prophecy tells us that the coming Messiah would be born in Bethlehem...

This prophecy was understood by the Rabbi's...

Micah 5:2 (ESV) — But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

As you know, scholars tell us that Jesus fulfilled over 330 Old Testament prophecies...

Many of those prophecies are specifically pointed out in the New Testament...

But many more of those prophecies Jesus fulfilled are not specifically pointed out in the New Testament, but alluded to...

One in particular to the birth story is the location in which the king would come...

Micah 4:8 (ESV) — And you, O tower of the flock, hill of the daughter of Zion, to you shall it come, the former dominion shall come, kingship for the daughter of Jerusalem.

The Rabbinical writings known as the Mishnah reveal two things to us regarding this "TOWER OF THE FLOCK"

First, its tower was a lookout for any approaching danger

Second, the floor level was used to house the lambs that were to become part of the daily sacrifices at the Temple...

Every morning and evening a lamb without defect was to be slain as a sacrifice for the sins of the people...

So...

These Shepherds were no ordinary shepherds...

These were Shepherds specifically trained to identify and care for the sheep that were birthing sacrificial lambs!

- **They would keep the Tower of the Flock ceremonial clean for the specific purpose of birthing these ewe lambs...**
- **They would keep their sheep outside 24 hours a day...**
- **But when a pregnant sheep was about to give birth they would bring her into the Tower of the Flock...**

- **Upon giving birth, the Shepherds would inspect the sheep**
- **Was it a male?**
- **Was it without any defects?**
- **If it met those requirements they would then protect the newborn lamb from any harm by doing two things...**
- **(1) They would wrap the lamb in strips of cloth (swaddling cloths)**
- **(2) They would place it in a manger with straw to keep it from incurring any defects**

So when these Shepherds were told by the angel...

Luke 2:11–12 (ESV) — For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

They fully understood where to look and what to look for!

Suddenly these Shepherds MATTER!

➤ **You too have a story that MATTERS**

You may think you are a nobody... or that your part doesn't matter...

But think again!

You have a UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE on the grace and mercy of God!

You have a GOD STORY!

1. The Shepherds PERSPECTIVE

2. The Shepherds PARTICIPATION

Luke 2:13–16 (ESV) — And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” 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.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

They could have made excuses at this point...

They could have pondered this and called some rabbi to find out more information...

They could have taken it all in, but refused to go

But they didn't!!!

They understood there was a GREATER STORY taking place and they had been invited to join God's BIGGER STORY!

➤ **You too have a story to JOIN**

Your story must join together with God's BIGGER story!

The story of the birth is part of a much bigger story of God's grace

John the Baptist

John 1:29 (ESV) — The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”

As believers we join together in God’s BIGGER story by realizing, like those shepherds did, that the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger was the Sacrificial Lamb of God that has come to take away the sins of the world!

The Apostle Peter

1 Peter 1:18–19 (NLT) — For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And it was not paid with mere gold or silver, which lose their value. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.

For 33 years later not far from the manger in which Jesus was laid, our Sacrificial Lamb was taken to a Cross to shed His blood and give His body for the sins of all mankind...

The day prior to Jesus fulfilling His purpose as our Sacrificial Lamb He sent Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal...

Think about this with me for a minute...

- **Peter and John entered Jerusalem and went to the Temple to purchase a spotless lamb for sacrifice...**
- **They get the lamb and then take it to the priest for sacrifice...**
- **They then take the lamb and roast it along with making all the other preparations for the Passover meal**

→ A spotless lamb, probably born in the same place Jesus was born, possibly laid in the same manger He had been placed, had been wrapped in swaddling cloths after inspection...

As the disciples sat down with Jesus for this very special Passover meal Jesus declared...

Luke 22:15 (ESV) — “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.”

Just as the shepherds had to recognize their story in the midst of God’s bigger grace story, we too must join our stories into God’s bigger grace story...

We do this by PARTICIPATION...

1 Corinthians 10:16 (ESV) — The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?

This “participation” is us entering into fellowship with the finished work of Jesus, our sacrificial lamb, by taking the Lord’s Supper!

The Apostle Paul

1 Corinthians 5:7b (ESV) — ... For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.

Jesus made this declaration to the Father regarding Himself...

Hebrews 10:5–7 (ESV) — Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, 'Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.' ”

→ → Taking of the Bread ← ←

Take the bread in your hand.

As you look at the bread, think about the body of Jesus.

Luke 22:19 (ESV) — And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

→ → Taking of the Juice ← ←

Luke 22:20 (ESV) — And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

1. The Shepherds PERSPECTIVE

2. The Shepherds PARTICIPATION

3. The Shepherds PROCLAMATION

Luke 2:17–20 (ESV) — And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

When the shepherds had arrived at the tower of the flock they found Joseph and Mary...

Looking into the Manger they found the baby!

He, the spotless lamb of God, was wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in the manger!

It is very likely that other shepherds, who were there tending the other baby lambs that were to be carted to the Temple for sacrifice, had witnessed the birth of Jesus!

Can you imagine!

They had nursed sheep as they were giving birth to ewes that would become sacrificial lambs at the Temple...

They had examined those ewes to make sure they were males without defect...

Once the ewes passed their inspection they gingerly wrapped the newborn ewes in swaddling cloths and laid them in mangers to protect them from harm...

These shepherds who had just arrived from the fields, upon seeing Jesus lying in a manger, unveiled the words the angel had spoken to them...

Luke 2:11-12 (ESV) — “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”

Luke 2:18 (ESV) — And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

This “wondering” was NOT questioning, but MARVELING!

They were in awe!!!!

“KING OF KINGS”

➤ **You too have a story to UNVEIL**

John the Baptist

John the Baptist called Jesus, “The lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world!”

The Apostle Peter

Peter declared, “God paid a ransom” with “the precious blood of Christ, the spotless, sinless lamb of God!”

The Apostle Paul

Paul declared Jesus as “our Passover Lamb” that “has been sacrificed!”

Jesus paid it all!

All to Him I owe!

Sin had left a crimson stain,

He washed it white as snow!

On the cross, Jesus carried...

... ALL Our Sins

... ALL Our Shame

... ALL Our Separation

... ALL Our Slavery

... ALL Our Sorrows

... ALL Our Sickneses

December 19, 2021

Crossgates AM Message
inSIGNIFICANT!
The Shepherds Story
Luke 2:8-20

David Jett

1. The Shepherds _____

➤ *You too have a story that* _____

2. The Shepherds _____

➤ *You too have a story to* _____

3. The Shepherds _____

➤ *You too have a story to* _____