

A. SERMON SLIDES

Slide 1:
The Announcement
Luke 2:8-20

Slide 2:
Luke 2:8-20 (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.” 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. 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.

Slide 3:
The 4 words that define the story
* Fear
* Behold
* Glory
* Peace

Slide 4:
The "Fear" has always been there for the shepherds, but the Angel of the Lord has revealed it.

Slide 5:
Eden = a place where God says, "I Am," and humans say "we are."

Slide 6:
We are in a glory war with God

Slide 7:

The "darkness" is more comfortable because in it we can believe whatever we want

Slide 8:

We are born afraid of God, so that a far-away God is a scary concept, but a real, close God is a terror.

Slide 9:

No one is at war with the God they create in their minds

Slide 10:

We have a Problem. We are thoroughly unqualified to be our own gods. It's killing us.

Slide 11:

Glory ever-ascending from humans to God, and Peace ever-descending from God to humankind.

Slide 12:

The Angels are always beholding the Good News.

Are we?

B. GROUP DISCUSSION

1) Read Luke 2:8-20. What stands out to you in this text? What were some of the emotions involved?

2) Of all the places and people to make this Announcement...the greatest one ever on earth, why tell shepherds in a field? Why do you think God did this?

3) Do you fear God? Have an honest discussion about your most inward feelings toward God. Do you avoid Him? Try to appease Him? Do you barter with Him? Has He ever drawn close to you in some way, and what was that experience like? What was it like to finally become His friend, and how did that happen?

4) In what ways are you still in a "glory war" with God? Where do you feel valued, or unvalued? Where do you feel defensive? Where do you feel slighted or unnoticed? Where are you still struggling to give God glory?

5) How can we do better at "beholding" our salvation? How can we create practices that help us to bring it in more deeply in order to heal our hearts?

6) Prayer and praise