



# gracefellowship

Whispers of Christmas

December 24, 2020

Whispers Proclamations of...JESUS

What kinds of announcements get you excited?

- For me it's the announcement of a new super hero movie (remember when we went to movie theaters and watched movies?).
- My kids are waiting for a new puppy to be born and the announcement one is coming home with us.
- Announcement of a new iPhone release
- The recent announcement of a vaccine to fight the pandemic we find ourselves in was a momentous occasion.

Those are all things that get announced with joy and enthusiasm for the whole world to hear about.

During our Christmas series we have been talking about whispers of Christmas-things God said and did quietly in the Old Testament that came to ultimate fulfillment in the birth of Jesus.

- Adam and Eve heard a whisper of **hope** after they sinned against God. He told them that one day a child would be born who would crush the head of the serpent and put an end to the sin that had entered the world.
- Abraham heard a whisper of **blessing** for the whole world. God told Abraham that his family would become a great nation and through him the entire world would be blessed.
- David heard a whisper of **royalty** when God told him someone from his family would have an everlasting kingdom.

But none of these people would see these whispers come to pass. They were things God quietly revealed about His ultimate plan to save the world that would happen in the distant future.

Tonight we come to Christmas and the story changes. The things God said in hushed tones in the Old Testament get proclaimed loudly in the gospels. When we read the story of the first Christmas we see that God is no longer interested in whispering about His plans, He announces them and proclaims them publicly and loudly! And what's amazing is that once God begins proclaiming the good news of the birth of Jesus people soon follow suit! Let's look at the story together and let's move away from whispers of Christmas to bold proclamations of

Christmas!

**:: Luke 2:1-14**

**1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.**

**2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)**

**3 And everyone went to their own town to register.**

**4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.**

**5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.**

**6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,**

**7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.**

**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.”**

The first proclamation of Christmas comes to shepherds out in the fields and the angel confirms all three of the whispers we have talked about in this series:

1. Good news that will cause great joy for ALL the people...Abraham was promised that through him a blessing would come to all nations.
2. The angels proclaim this miraculous event happened today in the town of DAVID...King David was promised that an eternal King would come from his lineage. The reason Mary and Joseph are in Bethlehem at the time of the census was because they belonged to the house and line of David.
3. A SAVIOR has been born...Adam and Eve were promised a child would come who would crush the head of the serpent and put an end to the reign of sin in our world.

God whispered about these things in the Old Testament, but now He is making these things known publicly. The proclamation of Jesus' birth didn't end with one angel speaking to the shepherds- look again at verses 13-14:

**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."**

The angel choir gives us a perfect understanding of what Christmas is all about: God's glory and God's peace!

The angels prioritize God's glory!

This is important for us to remember because Christmas has become so secularized that even for Christians it is easy to get lost in giving gifts and decorating our homes and going to parties that we take our eyes off the glory of God.

We are meant to bring glory to God in everything we do and say. This has been a difficult year and I hate to break it to you, but there are no promises that next year is going to be any better. So how do we live with hope and joy and peace? We need to be people that pursue the glory of God. We need to see God in His awesome glory and know that He is good and He is in control!

*Where the glory of God is present the peace of God reigns!* On the night Jesus was born God wanted the world to know that it was possible to be at peace with Him. Sin had separated us from God, but now, through Jesus, we could once again know God in an intimate and personal way and have peace restored to all sin had broken.

Now, let me ask you a question: what do you think you would do if a choir of angels showed up in the middle of the night and told you to go find a baby who would be the Savior of all mankind? I doubt any of us would be like, "Well, that was a great concert! Let's get back to work!"

No! We would run as quickly as we could to go find the baby we were told about! And that is exactly what the shepherds did. Pick up the story with me in Luke 2:15.

**:: Luke 2:15-20**

**15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."**

**16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.**

**17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,**

**18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.  
19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.  
20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.**

Here's what I love most about the shepherds- when they leave Jesus and head back to their sheep they spread the word! The shepherds became people who proclaimed the good news of Jesus coming to be our Savior.

But I want us to get the order of things right. Before the shepherds became witnesses for the Christ child, they worshiped Him. We cannot witness about that which we do not know. Worship of Jesus results in spreading the news about Him without fear or hesitation.

The shepherds didn't whisper among themselves about what they had experienced- they proudly proclaimed that Jesus had come! This is our encouragement for this season as we get ready to head into a new year: be people who worship at the feet of Jesus and then are unashamed to proclaim to others that He is the Savior of the world! The deeper your worship of Jesus becomes the more likely you are to share His goodness with others.

Our world needs to see the glory of God and know the peace that comes in having a relationship with Jesus and it is the privilege of Christians to proclaim the good news of Jesus! The greatest gift you can receive this year is a deeper understanding of the glory of God as you worship Him and the comfort that comes from His peace in your heart.

Do you know that peace today? Have you recognized that Jesus is the Savior of the world? More importantly, that He is the Savior of your soul? God's glory and majesty are found in Jesus. As you worship Him you will find peace that never fades. Where sin has caused us to be at war with God and His purposes for our lives, Jesus forgives sin and invites us to experience peace with God that can never be taken away from us. The invitation of Christmas is to become a worshiper of Jesus and to let His love restore everything in you that is broken and hurting so that you find absolute peace in Him.