

# THE SHEPHERDS: SEIZE GOD

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Luke 2:

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INTRO.

NOTE: This sermon was presented in costume as a dramatic monologue.

-- Hello, my name's Jacob. Now, you need to understand that I'm a shepherd; so I 'm not used to talkin' to a bunch a people like this. I'd rather be out in the country with my brothers watchin' our flocks.

But I'm here today to tell ya about somethin' that happened to me. I musta told the story a hundred times, but I never git tired a tellin' it. 'cause it's so amazin and surprisin. It's amazin 'cause it's the story about the birth of Yashua ha Meshiach - you probably know Him better as Jesus, the Christ. An' it's surprisin 'cause the birth was announced to us shepherds. That was surprisin' for a couple a reasons. For one thing, we're jist plain, ordinary folk. We work hard, but we ain't educated or influential.

Fact is, we're even even considered "unclean" by many of the religious uppity-ups, like the Pharisees and priests. Not that we're real dirty or anything. Although, I guess I gotta admit that after stayin out the hillside for a month or two takin care of a hundred sheep you do have a tendency to develop a kinda distinct aroma.. But the problem that the religious leaders have with us is that we don't pay attention to a lotta their rituals - like washin yer hands in a special kinda way 8 or 10 times a day. It always did seem pretty strange to me that we could raise sheep for sacrificin in the Temple, but that we ourselves weren't clean enough or good enough to worship at the Temple.

-- Well, that's why the idea that God would announce the birth of His Son to us is so down right surprising. I've thought about that a lot - why God chose us - and one of the main things I've come up with is that God knew that we'd seize that opportunity. And we did. As soon as the angels announced the birth of Jesus to us, we took of an' headed straight for Bethlehem to find that baby.

-- You know, I learned a lot from that experience, and I'd like to share some of it with you.

I. TO BEGIN WITH, GOD IS AT WORK ALL AROUND YOU AND IN WAYS THAT JUST MIGHT SURPRISE YOU.

-- Bethlehem was bustin with activity. Caesar Augustus had decided to take a census to make sure that he was getting enough taxes. The twon was full of people - soldiers, census takers, travelers. With all those people and with all that activity who woulda thought to pay attention to the birth of a baby to some young, ordinary couple from a little hick town up north?

Well, God did. 'Cause you see great Caesar was jist an errand boy for Almighty God. The LORD was usin Caesar to fulfill Micah's prophecy bout where the Messiah would be born:

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from old, from ancient times."

-- One thing I learned that night is that God is at work around us, and He's at work in surprising people - like that couple from Nazareth - and in surprising places - like a manger in a stable.

II. ANOTHER THING I LEARNED IS THAT GOD SENDS OPPORTUNITIES TO YOU WHILE YOU'RE JIST DOIN YOUR JOB.

-- All the action and excitement was in Bethlehem, but us shepherds was out on a dark hillside outside of town - jist doin our job, jist watchin sheep an' makin sure that they wasn't attacked by some night animal. We wasn't doin nothing special, but God sent us the opportunity of a lifetime.

-- I've known people who were always chasin after some kinda opportunity - always lookin for greener pasture - always tryin to make something happen. But you know what? Some times you jist need to do your duty - jist keep pluggin away, day after day. God knows where you are. He knows how to find you - even if you're on a dark hillside in some little place that the world never heard of. God can send His opportunity to

you any time, any place. And He send His greatest opportunities to those who are jist doin their job.

### III. I ALSO LEARNED THAT GOD'S OPPORTUNITIES CAN SOMETIMES BE FEARFUL.

-- As long as we was jist watchin the sheep in the quiet of the night, we was jist fine. But when that midnight sky began to glow like it was filled with a hundred suns and when a thousand angels appeared outta nowhere and crowded the sky and when the Angel of the LORD stood right in front of us - I want to tell you, we was downright afraid. It might a been the opportunity of a lifetime, but it was terrifyin.

-- As I've thought about it, I come to realize that lots a oppportunities and turning points have some fear in them - like when you decide to get married, or when you're gonna have a kid, or when you have to move to some new place.

But God understands our fears. In fact, the first thing the angel said to us was, "Don't be afraid. I've got good news for you." The idea of getting to know God an turning your life over to Him an sayin, "God, you will be done," well, that's pretty scary. But you can do it without any holdin back cause God's desire is to do what's good fer you.

### IV. ANOTHER THING I LEARNED IS THAT GOD CAN MAKE HIS GUIDANCE REAL CLEAR.

-- The angel said to us , "Today in the city of David a Savior is born, and here's a sign for you - you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Now, I'm not someone who's always lookin for some kind of a sign. Most of the time we don't need one - all we need to do is pray and read the Scriptures where God tells us what we need to do. But there are some special times when you gotta make a real bid decision or when something real important is about to happen that God will give you some clear sign to let you know what He wants you to do.

I'm almost finished. Just two more things.

### V. ONCE YOU KNOW, YOU'D BETTER GO.

-- Once God lets you know what He wants you to do, you'd better do it.

As soon as the angels told us about the birth of Jesus, we went right away to find Him - as fast as we could go. And guess what. We found everything exactly as the angel had told us - the baby wrapped in cloths, lyin in a manger.

The young couple was named Mary and Joseph, and we told them the fantastic story about what had jist happened to us and about the angel's announcement. "We know it sounds unbelievable," we said, "and you probably think we're crazy, but we swear it's the truth."

Mary jist looked at us an smiled an said, "You think that's something, listen to what happened to me&hellip;" And she told us about how the angel had appeared to her when she was betrothed to Joseph and told her that God had chosen her to give birth to His Son, the promised Messiah.

And then Joseph looked at us an said, "That's not all&hellip;" and he proceeded to tell us about how the angel appeared to him too and told him that Mary hadn't been unfaithful but that she was the one who had been chosen to give birth to the Son of God.

### VI. ONE LAST TING - AND IT MAY BE THE MOST IMPORTANT - ONCE YOU GO, YOU'LL BE CHANGED.

-- When you find the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll never be the same again.

Oh sure, when we left the couple and the baby in the stable, we returned to the same hillside and continued to live in the same place, but we weren't the same people. God had changed our lives forever.

When you meet Jesus, the Son of God who came to save you from the judgment of your sins and to bring you to the heavenly Father, when you meet Jesus, you become a new person. Jesus gives you a new heart, a new start, a new hope, and a new purpose for living. Once you find Him you'll never be the same again. I know, cause it happened to me.