

"For All the People"

Luke 2:10b

Pastor Dan Erickson

December 21, 2025

This month, each sermon here at Chisholm Baptist Church has focused on just one Bible verse. Today, the fourth day of Advent we look at probably my favorite Christmas verse. **Luke 2:10 And the angel said to them (the shepherds), "Fear not, for behold I bring you good news and great joy that will be for all the people."** Folks, that is really what Christmas is about, good news, joyous news, for everyone. And that, friends, includes you. Let's pause and pray the Lord would use this very special verse to increase your joy this week, and in the weeks ahead.

Good news of great joy. That is how the angel describes his message to the shepherds. He spells it out in **Luke 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.**

This birth announcement is really the culmination of the entire Old Testament. A savior, a savior promised way back in Genesis 3:15, the seed of the woman who would crush the head of the seed of the serpent. Christ, the Messiah, God's anointed deliverer. The Lord, the Hebrew word Adonai, the term used for God Himself.

This is indeed good news, the gospel. The people of Israel were suffering political oppression under Roman rule. But, far more significant was the spiritual oppression they were under. As sinners, rebels against God by both nature and choice, they were in bondage to both the penalty and power of sin. They faced a debt they could not pay, and chains they could not break. But the Savior has been born, the Messiah has come. Everything would be different. Freedom, hope and joy were on the horizon.

It is indeed good news of great joy. But the next words the angel speaks are equally important: "That will be for *all* the people." Though that phrase is obviously inclusive, I don't think anyone could imagine *everything* it meant. Let's explore some of the people this good news is for.

First, there are social outcasts, those who were never the cool kids. Clearly the good news of great

joy is for them because the shepherds are in this category. They are the ones to whom the angel spoke. Yes, King David had been a shepherd, but by this time, the first century A.D., it was not thought of as a very respected profession. Shepherds worked with animals and were often considered ceremoniously unclean by the priests. They didn't smell very nice. People thought shepherds often confused "Mine with thine." In other words, they were viewed as thieves. In fact, their testimony often was not accepted in court because people didn't think they could be trusted. Respectable folks didn't dream of their sons becoming shepherds.

Yet the angel speaks to *them*. They were guys who really needed some good news and *they got it*. Yet, the shepherds are not the only outcasts for whom the Savior, Christ the Lord, had come. Throughout the New Testament, especially in Luke, the Messiah Jesus heals sick people, folks who are not well physically or spiritually. That includes beggars, the blind, lepers, those who cannot walk, people who *really need good* news. The message that the "Messiah has come" is for these kinds of folks.

In the 21st century the gospel is still for outcasts. We may have different ideas as to who that includes. I tried to think of an occupation today that has a reputation similar to the first century shepherds. The best I could come up with was "carnies," people who work and travel with a carnival. But the only "carny" I actually know, former carny, is our own Rita V., one of the most delightful people in this congregation. And yes, the good news of Jesus coming is certainly for carnies.

Though things have certainly improved in recent decades, the intellectually and physically disabled often feel like outcasts. But yes, the gospel is for them. It was a joy this summer to baptize Ariel, a gal who lives in a group home and is here at church most Sundays. I am so glad she understands that the Christmas message, the good news of Jesus coming, is for her, just as much as it is for me or anyone else.

Secondly, the good news is for immoral people. Some folks are outcasts because they do things, wrong, sinful things, that cause them to be looked down on by others. Prostitutes, thieves, and drunks were in that category in Jesus' day. Today we might include drug addicts or drug dealers, maybe people who embezzle money or are producing pornography, or folks who do even worse things. These people are sinners.

But the good news of great joy is for them. Jesus ate with sinners and befriended sinners. In fact, He said **Luke 5:32** “**I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.**”

It seems many Christians think, “Yes, we are all sinners and Jesus calls us to repentance and salvation. But I am not sure this applies to really bad sinners.” Oh, but it does. The good news of great joy is for them.

Tony Campalo told a story of how he arranged a surprise birthday part for a woman in Philadelphia who was a prostitute. Now, there was nothing inappropriate or immoral about their relationship. Tony had simply become her friend. The story is amusing because we find it unusual, even shocking that any Christian, much less a Baptist Seminary professor like Campalo, would befriend a prostitute. But Campalo said, “Isn't the real strange thing the fact that very few Christians befriend drunkards, prostitutes and other sinners, when Jesus, the one whom Christians claim to follow, befriended those types of folks all the time?”

Now, this doesn't mean their sin is okay. The Bible is clear it is not; their sin deserves God's wrath. We should never tell people their sin is okay, whether it is sexual sin, drunkenness, pride or envy. But we should be telling them, the good news of Christmas is for everyone, even the worst of sinners.

Third, the good news is for the poor and for the rich and for everyone in-between. Jesus the Messiah has come for people of every socio-economic group. The shepherds were lower working-class folks. Throughout the New Testament, it is often the poor who often seem interested in listening to and following Jesus.

And the wealthy? Well, the rich young ruler refuses to follow Jesus because he is too attached to his wealth. Jesus warns us that we cannot love both God and money. Yet, Zacheus, Joseph of Arimathea, and Lydia are some of the rich folks in the New Testament who trust and follow Jesus. And the wisemen, the magi, who came to see the Savior who had been born, after the shepherds did, would be considered wealthy as well.

In our society today there is often mistrust between people of different economic classes. The poor don't trust the rich, the rich don't trust the poor and the middle class don't trust either. But it doesn't matter if someone envies you because of how much money you have or if you envy someone who has more money than you do. The good news of Christmas is for you, and it is for them. It is for all the people, no matter how much money they have or don't have.

Fourth, the good news is for people of every ethnicity. When the angel said the Christmas message was for “all the people” I suspect the shepherds thought that meant for all kinds of Jewish people. After all the Christ, was a Jewish Messiah, who would, Matthew 1:21, save His people from their sins.

Yet, while He was on earth, Jesus made it clear that the good news was for Samaritans, the despised cousins of the Jews. And after Jesus' resurrection, the apostles began to proclaim the gospel not only in Judea and Samaria, but to “the uttermost parts of the earth.” Gentiles, non-Jewish people, from all over the Roman Empire began to trust and follow Jesus.

Soon most of the Christian believers in churches were gentiles. This fulfilled the words the Lord spoke to Abraham 2000 years earlier. In **Galatians 3:7b, 8** the Apostle Paul says, **(All) those who gave faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”** The coming of Jesus was very good news for both Jews and Gentiles.

At various times over the years Christians have forgotten that the good news is for people of every ethnicity. Racists have suggested people with a particular skin color are either sub-human or

simply inferior and are not worthy to hear the gospel. That's ridiculous. The Lord Jesus has called us, Matthew 28:19, to make disciples of all nations or in Greek all *ethnos*, all people, or as the angel said, "all the people."

One of the best moments in the history of Chisholm Baptist church was when the Swedish speaking people from Finland who made up this church, decided that the worship services and preaching needed to be in English. They wanted other ethnicities besides Swede-Finns and Swedes to hear the good news of great joy which is for all the people.

Fifth, the good news is for people of every gender. Now, I am very certain there are just two genders, male and female. The Savior, Christ the Lord, came for both, and even for men and women who are confused about their gender. First century Jewish culture was often patriarchal. Some men would pray, "Lord, I thank you that I was not born a gentile or woman."

But the coming of Jesus changed everything. Mary Magdelin, the Samaritan woman, the woman caught in adultery, Mary and Martha of Bethany, and Mary the mother of Jesus, they had a lot of Mary's back then, were all women treated with compassion, dignity and respect by Jesus. Numerous followers of Jesus, including the first to discover the empty tomb, were women. In his letters, the apostle mentions Priscilla, Phoebe, Junia and 15 other women who were his coworkers in Christian ministry.

In fact, Paul writes in **Galatians 3:28** **There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** In other words, when it comes to our spiritual identity there are no ethnic distinctions. The good news of great joy, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is for everyone, for all the people.

Now, because we seek to obey what God says in the New Testament, Chisholm Baptist Church is a complementarian church. That means we recognize the Lord has called men and women to play different, but complementary roles in both the church and home. But this certainly does not mean, and should never be thought to mean, that one gender is superior to the other. The coming

of Jesus brought value and dignity to women in a way that had never been experienced and is still not experienced in parts of the world where Christianity is not known. Christmas is indeed good news of great joy for women.

Sixth, the good news is for people with diverse political beliefs. The political climate in Israel during the time of Jesus was intense. Living under Roman occupation, some Jews were collaborators, cooperating with or even working for the government. Others were involved in efforts to encourage revolt and overthrow the Romans.

If you are concerned about intense political arguments over Christmas dinner at your house, think about how heated things could get between the pro-Roman and anti-Roman Jews. But the Savior, Christ the Lord, was born for both of them. And the wild thing is that when Jesus chose his 12 disciples, one was collaborator, Matthew, the tax collector, employed by Rome, and one a rebel, Simon the zealot. Jesus had come, had been born, for all the people.

There must have been some interesting discussion around the fire when the disciples were camping out. Jesus understood why Matthew made the choice he did, and why Simon chose the path he did. And Jesus likely would have reminded all the disciples that neither support nor opposition to Rome is not nearly as important as loyalty to God's kingdom. No matter what political views one has, it should never overshadow or interfere with our faith in Jesus Christ and our commitment to follow Him. If we have to choose between a party or cause and Jesus, we always need to choose Jesus. That is true in the first century, the 21st century and anytime in between. And if you know people whose political views are just wrong, remember, the good news of great joy is for them too.

Okay, I think you are probably getting the point. The good news of great joy that the Savior, Christ the Lord had been born, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is for *all the people*. It is for social outcasts and immoral people. It is for rich and poor, for folks of every ethnicity, for male and female, and for those of all political persuasions. It is for people who have made good choices, and for those who have not. It is for *everyone*.

That means two very important things for us this morning.

#1 The good news is for you. No matter who you are, no matter your age, no matter what kind of job you have, the good news is for you. Now, maybe you think God's tent just is not big enough for you. Perhaps you have made mistakes, big mistakes, done things of which you are ashamed.

But remember the good news is for those who are not good people. It is for sinners, or more specifically, for those who recognize and acknowledge they are sinners. The one group of people who will never experience the great joy the gospel brings are those who think they don't need it, who think they are doing just fine on their own, who seem themselves as good people who have no need for a Savior.

Maybe that is you, you are enjoying some success in life and others think you are a fine person. But even though you may be making it in the eyes of other people, in God's eyes, without Jesus, you are failing. You are not "making it" when it comes to God's way. And do you know what, at some point in your life I believe you will realize that everything you have is not enough. It may be a divorce, or a rebellious child. It may be a loss of a job. It may be the tragic death of someone in your family. Or it may be an illness that threatens to take your own life.

But, at some point, you are going to realize that because you do not have Jesus Christ, everything that you have is not enough. I pray God will open your eyes so you might turn from trusting in yourself and trust in Jesus the Savior, Christ the Lord. If you are not sure what that means or how to do that, make sure you talk to me or one of the other pastors before you leave today.

Or maybe you are thinking, yes, this all sounds great, but I am just not a religious person. So what! The shepherds were not religious people. The magi may have been religious, but it maybe was not even the right religion. There were not Jews.

Jesus came to save non-religious people. If that is who you are, Jesus came to save you. Now, if you are a religious person, or spiritual person, don't give up hope. Jesus came to save you as well.

Simeon and Anna were two very religious people, devout Jews. And Luke tells us when they saw the baby Jesus, they knew the good news of great joy was for them. They trusted no in their religious, but in Jesus, the Messiah and Savior God had sent.

Friends, whoever you are, the good news, the gospel is for you. If you are not trusting in Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, that is what you need to do today. Because the good news is for you.

#2 You need to remember the good news is for people you know. For everyone you know. That includes people who might be very different from you... It makes me a little uncomfortable to be reminded that the gospel is for outcasts. Why? Because we are a church made up of primarily nice, comfortable middle-class folks. We are nice, comfortable middle-class folks living in communities where many people are not.

I need to remember, you need to remember, that the gospel is for those who don't have jobs and are not well dressed. Jesus came for folks who don't take showers very often and are not able to read very well. This is something we need to keep in mind. Especially at Christmas time, the angel told the shepherds the good news of great joy is for all the people, that included people who are not like us, for people with whom we maybe don't really associate, but they are people who need Jesus and they are people for whom Jesus came.

The good news is also for people who are a lot like us. It is for the next-door neighbor who thinks he is getting along fine in life without God. He needs to know about the good news of great joy. Maybe the Lord will give you an opportunity to tell him. May you should invite him to church on Wednesday evening. But Jesus came for him too.

The good news is also for that snobby sister-in-law you have. Yes, she bugs you, but she needs Jesus. He came for her; he came to save her from her sins. Maybe you can tell her that or invite her to church on Wednesday evening.

The good news is also for that guy at school who is so smart, a straight "A" student. But he is kind of awkward in how he relates to people and doesn't really seem to have friends. He needs Jesus. Jesus came for him. Maybe you can tell him

that or invite him to church on Wednesday evening.

Friends, I would suggest you identify one person you know who doesn't seem to realize that Jesus came for him/her. Then ask the Lord to give you the opportunity to share the good news of great joy with that individual, either directly or by inviting them to come with you to church on Wednesday. Or maybe you can encourage someone to just watch the live stream.

But friends, remember: the good news is *for everyone*. Everyone we know needs the good news. May God help us to share it with clarity and joy.