

A Message for the shepherds

St. luke 2:1-20

1 And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

2 This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

3 So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

4 Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

6 So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

**14 “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”**

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.”

16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

17 Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

18 And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Introduction:

Today's text is profound to me on many levels. It is profound because God reveals somethings in this text that he does not reveal in any other portion of the scripture.

For example, in the first portion of this narrative we see God using the political systems of Humanity to fulfill prophecy concerning the birth location of the messiah.

According to the bible it was already prophesied that Jesus had to be born in Bethlehem.

At the time of this text and the pregnancy of his servant Mary, her and Joseph were both in Nazareth.

God needed to get Jesus in the place that he was supposed to be born, so he used the political system of a governmental census to move Joseph back to his home country so that he could be counted for the population count.

Joseph's home town was Bethlehem! This was known as the City of David, and the place of his ancestry.

According to scripture...Bethlehem was the place that the Messiah was to be born...

Here it is...

When the time was right, God used human laws to assist the divine and prophetic plan of glory to fulfill scripture concerning the messiah.

Joseph in obedience to Cesar's census, took Mary his wife, and brought her to Bethlehem where she could deliver the baby.

God did something else in the first portion of this narrative. He had Mary to give birth to her son **outside in a stable!**

Here we see the heart of God, establishing the ministry of Jesus before he even gets going with the work of his hands.

God the father establishes Christ first ministry appearance outside in a stable!

Look at the text...

God is the creator of the Universe, he could've created a castle with golden streets, servants like angels to run to and fro preparing the best nursery any baby could ever sleep in...

But instead he would deny Joseph and Mary, the earthly comforts of a Kings quarters, and have her to give birth outside in the fields under the canopy of heaven for all of the Angels to see.

The bible said that they came to Bethlehem, and there was no room for them in the inn...

Here it is...

The local motel was filled with travelers and nobody would give a pregnant woman their room, so the inn keeper let them sleep behind the motel outside where the animals were kept.

God is teaching me in the passage it doesn't matter where you lay your head, just be ready to deliver the word when its time to bring it forth!

Thirdly there is the issue of the journey. Mary was 9 months pregnant...she traveled by donkey from one City to the other. Over Mountains, valleys and hills carrying the word...

She didn't complain about the assignment, she went where God said she had to go. She rode on what her provisions could provide.

Although she was uncomfortable, although she was tired, although she was poor, she was ready when God said it was time to deliver what he placed inside of her for Gods honor and glory.

[Can I turn the light on here?]

I learned in this narrative, that a good servant will carry the word, regardless of their provisions, proximity, position, posture, personhood, plans, or priorities.

Mary was on a mission, to do the will of God was the most important thing she could do on the earth.

God is teaching me in this passage, that a ministry of humility is the way he started his sons ministry and it was void of human-pomp and circumstance.

And we too, should have a ministry filled with humility... modeled after the savior... we too should embrace a lowly beginning and beware

of the glimmer of holly-wood when it comes to doing service for God in the earth....

Nobody is greater than Jesus, and if a manger-ministry was good enough for him, then it ought to be good enough for me.

I learned something else in this passage....

When God got ready to bring in the savior of the world he had two types of witnesses, “The Lowly and the Holy.” [Shepherds and Angels.]

Both of them were on divine assignment and both were the kind of messengers that nobody expected to carry or deliver a word from God.

That’s what this text is about today...its about God revealing himself and his plan to mankind, and doing it with a divine message for the world.

[He still uses the lowly and the holy]

Today let's look at **The Shepherds Meeting, The Shepherds Miracle, and The Shepherds Message.**

I. The Shepherds Meeting

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds **living out in the fields**, keeping **watch** over their **flock** by night.

9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

12 And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

Notice:

When we come to this portion of the text, we get to see a divine meeting take place between the Lowly Shepherds and the Holy Angel.

It is a meeting between unlikely strangers that God has divinely set up for a divine encounter.

The Shepherds in that day were a despised class of people. They were disrespected, low income making, unregarded by the societal elites.

They were a very common and uneducated group of people.

Yet this was who God chose to reveal himself to first! He did not go into the rabbinical schools and get the scribes.

He did not go into the kings court and get the wealthy. He did not go into the temple and get the pharisees or the sadducees.

He went into the fields, and sought out the ones that everybody else rejected.

You see beloved, to be a shepherd was a lowly occupation, it was to choose the simplicity of life.

It was a life for the slow lane of living. The way of nurturing and caring for that which cannot take care of itself.

[It was to be a protector of the innocent]

Secondly, we discover that the meeting was **shrouded in divinity!**

The text says....

-There was a bright light that shone all around them.

-There was a divine angel whose presence and presentation brought them fear.

-There was a salutation of divine greeting asking them to not be fearful.

- There was a divine proclamation of why the Angel had come.

*“I bring you **good tidings** of great **joy** which will be to all people.*

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

*And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in **swaddling cloths**, lying in a manger.”*

This was a divine invitation from God to join Him in observing what he was doing in the earth.

[Can I say some more?]

The gospel of Luke is notorious for divine meetings with God that carry invitations to join him in what he was doing in the earth.

This meeting was **unexpected**. This meeting was **unusual**, this meeting was for those who were **unacceptable** by others...but they were chosen by God to be used of God for the plan of God because of the heart of God.

This message was in the fields, with field people, doing field work, at an unusual time...

God came to the fields to get his new workers for this assignment...

This divine theme is the same theme for the world today. God is still calling the Lowly in the earth to be touched and called by the Holy.

Here it is...

God was revealing to these shepherds that he was doing something amazing in the earth, and they were the first ones to made aware of his divine arm!

God had come down to visit man, and nobody but the shepherds knew it and were invited to see it.

God had broken into time and upon his arrival into earth he greeted humanity and invited the lowest level of people to know that he had come.

Observation:

This is incredible! The creator of the universe was working in the earthly realm, and he didn't tell the scientist...He did not tell the circles of academia, he did not tell the politicians, he did not tell government or the ones who held power.

He chose to tell those who nobody respected or cared about...

He chose the lowly and disregarded. He chose those who society had rejected.

He chose people who worked in the fields...
[shepherds]

He gave the undeserving the opportunity to be first in line to see the **prince of peace**, the **miracle in the manger**, the **crown jewel** of the universe, the **king of kings** and the **lord of lords**.

They would've been at the back of the line, but he made the last first and gave them V.I.P status to do what nobody had ever done before, witnessed before or been invited to experience before.

What a joy! What a surprise! What a miracle!

Application:

God is still giving the same invitation today for those who are willing to be like a shepherd.

God is inviting the lowly in the earth to see what nobody else has been invited to see.

God is still revealing himself to those who are willing to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

God is still visiting those in society that everyone else has written off.

God is still talking to people that nobody else will talk with.

God is still drawing near to those who everybody else has left outside.

He loves the lowly, he loves the outsiders, he loves the humble, he loves the rejects of society, he loves those who are desiring the simple way of living and who have a need for him.

Question:

- 1.Are you shepherd like today in your heart?
- 2.Are you humbled by the mighty things of God?

3. Do you long to see him, hear him, or be near him?

God draws near to those who are willing to drawn near to him.

This text today is trying to teach us who it is that the lord is willing to meet with...and reveal his plan and heart to in the earth.

I don't know about you, but I want to have the opportunity to meet with him and hear his words just like these shepherds.

Let's learn some more....

We have looked at the shepherds meeting, let's look now at the shepherds miracle.

II. The Shepherds Miracle

13 And **suddenly** there was **with the angel** a *multitude* of the **heavenly host** *praising God* and saying:

**14 “Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth **peace, goodwill** toward men!”**

15 So it was, when **the angels** had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “*Let us now go to Bethlehem* and see this thing that has **come to pass**, which **the Lord** has made known to us.”

16 And they came **with haste** and found **Mary and Joseph**, and the **Babe** lying in a manger.

Notice:

When we come to this portion of the text we get to see what I call is the shepherds miracle!

I call it the shepherds miracle because the word is defined as... “A surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws...and is considered to be the work of a divine agency!”

It is also defined as a “highly improbable extraordinary event that brings welcomed consequences!”

[Did you catch it?]

It’s something that blows your mind, that only God could do!

Its something that cannot be explained by the wisdom of man!

It’s an act of God, for God, by God, because of God, so that man can see God like they have never seen him before!

Its a miracle.....

The text says that as soon as the Angel quit speaking.....

Out of nowhere, a Multitude... “Thousands upon Thousands” broke out in the heavens in a

praise and worship service.... Singing praises to God....

Can I say some more...

I think that they were already worshipping God for the plan of sending His only begotten son down to earth to become a man...

And what happen was after the Angel revealed to the shepherds what God was doing...

God the Father pulled back the veil of Glory, and let the shepherds on earth see what the other legion of Angels was doing while the **one Angel** was bringing them the good news...

Here it is...

Heaven was “Lit” with worship at the sight of the babe lying in a manger...

Heaven was “Lit” with the sight of the shepherds receiving the word of God for the first time....

Heaven was “Lit” with the idea that God had become a man, and had stooped down so low to redeem those who didn’t deserve it...

Heaven was “Lit” at the mystery of God and the Angels had already been praising him since the beginning of time....

Everyday in their praise of Him they saw God do something new!

But today was exceptional...never had they saw him step out of time, wrap himself in human flesh...

Descend from glory, gestate in the womb of a little girl, and come into his own world as a baby...

When they saw God do this...the whole creation of Angels burst forth with divine exaltation...

“ Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth **peace, goodwill** toward men!”

Here it is....

Every angel in the universe knew what God had just did...even the fallen angels/demons were put on notice by this song.....

Can I say some more...

There are some songs that put you on notice, that God had just done something....

There are some songs, that make you stand at attention and take notice of the activity of God in the earth!

There are some songs that make the Angels sing them, because God has done what he has never done before...

This was a divine miracle, this was the supernatural ONE revealing himself to all of the world...both visible and invisible!

Secondly, the miracle of Angels worshipping was so powerful that the shepherds were moved to go and investigate the work of God for themselves...

*“Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has **come to pass**, which **the Lord** has made known to us.”*

Here it is...

When God reveals himself to you, it always leaves you wanting more of him.....

When God pulled back the canopy of Glory and showed the shepherds exactly what the Angels were doing...

The Shepherds wanted to see the one that they were worshipping!

Observation:

Can I tell you that good worship ought to make you want to see the one that the song was written about!

Good worship ought to make you want to praise the one who came to save you...

Good worship ought to make you want to draw near to Godcloser than you ever been before...

It was a miracle and worship experience, that made these shepherds leave their flocks at night and travel into the city to find the King of glory who was lying in the manger!

[Can I get a witness?]

We have looked at the Shepherds meeting, we have looked at the Shepherds miracle, now let us look at the Shepherds message.

III. The Shepherds Message

17 Now when they had seen *Him*, they **made widely known** the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

18 And **all those** who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

19 **But** Mary kept **all** these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

Notice:

When we come to the end of this narrative, we get to see the shepherds do something with what they discovered!

- After they saw Jesus, they had a sermon to preach.
- After they saw Jesus they had a message to proclaim.
- After they saw Jesus, who was God in the flesh, they had to tell everybody that they came into contact with....

The text says that “they **made widely known** the saying which was told them concerning this Child.”

Here it is...

- Widely they spread the good news....
- Widely they proclaimed the divine...
- Widely they spoke about what they saw...
- Widely they described what they experienced, felt, observed, participated in, and discovered with God.

Widely they told it...to share it widely meant they broke out of their own community...

They didn't just keep the message in the fields...

They didn't just keep it among themselves.
They didn't just keep it in Bethlehem..
They didn't just keep it in Galilee....

They put the word out, they look for people to tell this news too.

They were serious evangelist, crossing demographics, neighborhoods, zip codes, cultures, generations.....

They widely spread the news...they widely put themselves out there to tell anyone that would listen to the message that God had given them....

Question:

- How widely are you telling it today?
- How widely are you sharing what the Lord has shown you?

- How widely are you spreading the miracle he has done for you?
- How widely are you communicating the truth of scripture?
- How broad is your reach?
- How far will you travel?
- How much will you give?
- How much will you do for all he has done for you?

They widely proclaimed the good news....

Secondly, when the shepherds spread their message they had a direct impact... The bible says...

“And **all those** who heard *it* **marveled** at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”

“**But Mary** kept **all** these things and pondered *them* in her heart.”

Check this out:

Their message was so powerful the people who heard it marveled! This word means to be filled with astonishment....

Here it is....

After they heard their message, they were wowed at the presentation.

They were filled with the divine ...
Now that's preaching... Thats preaching that makes you want to do something.

Thats preaching that makes you want to change your ways.

That's preaching that makes you want to draw close to God.

That's preaching that makes the difference.
That's preaching that matters!

The text says they were astonished or they marveled....

But not Mary...She was not only astonished, but she pondered “all of these things”...

She thought about these things.... This is written in the aorist tense...

Which means that this is all she thought about... she did it over and over and over again....

She kept thinking about the Angels that showed up to the shepherds in the fields...
And she thought about the song that the Angels sang for the Shepherds in the fields....

Gabriel didn't sing for her... She only saw one Angel, they saw multitudes ...

She was alone when she got the message...they were together...this news was perplexing
It was so deep that when she looked at the baby, thought about her own encounter, the Spirit of God alive in her womb, the Angels coming and

going, the song in the heavens, the strangers standing around the manger....

All she could do was ponder over and over again....

[Can I get a witness?]

Have you ever pondered on something that God has done for you?

Has the meeting, the miracle, and the message of God ever made you ponder what the Lord was doing in your life?

Has God ever wowed you to the point of pondering?

Has God ever revealed himself to you then confirmed it by the testimony of strangers?

Has God ever shown up in your little biddy life and then declared that he was gonna use you to do something great for Him in the earth?

If he has then you experienced what it looks like to ponder.... why in the world would he use you when there are so many better options...

[I got to leave now, but you my heart is filled with joy and about to explode!]

We have looked at the Shepherds Meeting.
We have looked at the Shepherds Miracle.
We have looked at the Shepherds Message, now let's look at the conclusion of the matter.

Conclusion:

20 Then the shepherds **returned**, *glorifying and praising God* for **all the things** that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Notice:

As we close the text says that the shepherds after having the meeting with the Angel, saw the

miracles of heaven and after spreading the message....

They returned....

Back to the fields...

Back to their lives...

Back to their routine...

Back to their calling...

Back to their occupations...

They went back to being who they were, accept they were different now....

They went back praising God....They went back worshipping...

[Did you catch it?]

The text is implying that there was a difference in their lives now that they had an encounter with God.

They were still shepherds, but now they were shepherds with a testimony...

- Shepherds who had seen the Lord.
- Shepherds who met the savior.
- Shepherds who had heard from heaven.
- Shepherds who knew what God was doing in the earth.

They were the same but they were different.
They still did the same jobs but they did them as worshippers now.

God didn't change who they were on the outside, but he changed who they were on the inside

He didn't make them rich....He made them wealthy!

He didn't make them smart, He made them wise.

He didn't make them aware, He made them **WOKE!**

He didn't give them a station in the government
they kept working in the fields...

They were lowly but they had dignity.
They were lowly but they had integrity.
They were lowly but they were happy.
They were lowly but they had joy.

In the fields they were having church.
In the fields they were worshipping.
In the fields they were on fire for God.
In the fields they were free.
In the fields they experienced revival.

They were not in the synagogues.
They were not in the temple.
They were not in the marketplace.

They were insiders who lived on the outside.
They were insiders who loved the outside.
They were insiders who knew what God was
like.

I'm closing now, but these shepherds look a lot like the good shepherd who would grow out of the manger and become the savior for mankind.

The good shepherd would worship outside...

The good shepherd would heal outside...

The good shepherd would feed the hungry outside...

The good shepherd would defeat devils outside...

The good shepherd would walk on water outside...

The good shepherd would give sight to the blind outside...

The good shepherd would conquer sin, and purchase humanity outside...

The good shepherd would lay down his life for the sheep outside...

The good shepherd laid down his life for the sheep of humanity.

He died on the old rugged cross for our transgressions.... [Didn't he die]

They put the good shepherd inside of a nother
mans tomb.

But the grave couldn't hold him, and early
Sunday morning he was raised back to life.