

We find ourselves in a strange lull right now, the wrapping paper has been cleaned up and recycled, the leftovers are beginning to thin out, and the "magic of Christmas" is beginning to meet the "reality" of January. But, on the church calendar, Christmas is not limited to a day; it is a season. Today, we stand with the shepherds not in the bright light of the angels but in that moment after the sky went dark and they had to decide what to do with all that they had seen.

Our readings from Isaiah, Psalms, and Luke weave together as a single narrative. We are the echo of the angel's song. We are moving from seeing the good news to sharing it.

Today, we began by hearing from Isaiah. He is writing to people who are in exile, who feel lost, forgotten, and broken. He helps them to envision a messenger running over the

mountain to tell them that the war is over. When you read this verse, you may focus on the good news part, but Isaiah chooses to focus on his feet. Why? Because news, no matter how spectacular it may be, is no good unless it is shared. The beauty in this messenger isn't their appearance, but their mission.

On this first Sunday after Christmas, we are reminded that God has "bared his holy arm" (v. v10). He didn't just send a memo. He showed up, set his royal draping aside, and rolled up his sleeves. He's ready to get to work and get messy right along with us to create his victory.

If Isaiah is the promise of the good news, then the Psalms is the reaction to it. Joy to the World, The Lord has Come! We are called to join with creation in singing a new

song, because old things are passing away and something new and glorious has come. When we celebrate Christmas, we aren't just celebrating the coming of a baby, but rejoicing in a cosmic shift. The hills clap their hands, and the waters sing for joy. If the earth recognizes its creator and responds with such joy, how much more should our response be? Psalms allow us to bridge the gap between the prophecy and Luke's reality.

The angels' concert is completed, and the shepherds stand alone in the dark field. What should their next move be? They do not wait and form a committee to discuss what they should do. They take action, and so should we. They travelled to Bethlehem, but didn't stay there. They returned to their lives changed, their very beings glorifying God! How

lucky we are that they didn't bask in the glory of the moment but put that energy into action.

But now we are here in 2025. The world is cold and dark. The angels have long since returned to heaven, and generations of shepherds have come and gone. But, we are still called on to share the message from the manger. The big question is how?

1. Conduct a CPI (close point inspection) of your "feet".

Isaiah reminds us that the feet of the messenger are beautiful; are yours? Where are your feet taking the message of God- to your home, to the grocery store, to work, or does the message stop when you leave this house of worship?

2. Identify your "new song" and sing it clearly. It's easy to default to our old songs of cynicism, worry, and fear. This week, consciously choose a new song of gratitude. Find one thing each morning that proves God's "holy arm" is still present in your life.
3. Return to life like the shepherds- changed. Don't wait for the sky to open up and angels to sing. Practice finding God in everyday tasks and moments.

What do you think, are you up to the task? I challenge you to join me in giving this a try in the days to come.

Let's be in this together.