

Message #1041
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"COME, LET US ADORE HIM"
{Luke 2:1-20}

Trinity Presbyterian Church
Christmas Eve
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INTRODUCTION

The announcement of the coming of the Messiah and the birth of Jesus altered lives forever.

A young teenage girl, sitting home doing her homework was visited by Gabriel the angel who informed her...

"You have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus..."

"How will this be," she asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

...for a moment, try to imagine the response she received from her parents when she told them of this incident.

...think of the awkwardness when she informed Joseph, to whom she was engaged, that she was pregnant

...her life was changed forever

...she is blessed among women

A young carpenter was anticipating his upcoming marriage to Mary...

...then he hears the unthinkable

...loving her so much he didn't want to embarrass her or reveal her condition to others

...yet, he felt betrayed and considered his options

...to break the engagement or not?

...what to do? what to say?

...after all, his reputation was at stake too.

...to do nothing would appear that he had fathered the child

...it was then that an angel appeared to him in a dream...

"Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins."

{Matthew 1:20-21}

...Joseph obeyed

...and his life was changed forever

...he was an honorable man

Then...there were those shepherds--a despised class of people in first century Palestine...

...those scraggy, smelly, guys who spent their days and nights on the hillsides surrounding the city caring for sheep

...not the type of people you would probably choose to announce the birth of the Messiah

...not known for their reliability

...nor for their sobriety

...amazing they were selected to be the first to hear of Jesus' birth

...common, ordinary, people

...lower--not upper--class men
...their lives were about to be altered forever!

THE SHEPHERDS

"There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and THEY WERE TERRIFIED! But the angel said to them, 'DO NOT BE AFRAID! I bring you GOOD NEWS of GREAT JOY that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth lying in a manger.'

"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom His favor rests.' "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!'"

What a production!

...Cecil B. DeMille or George Lucas could not have thought of such an incredible scene

...envision it in your minds...

...the splendor

...the majesty

Max Lucado writes about this event--

"The shepherds didn't ask God if He was sure He knew what He was doing. Had the angel gone to the theologians, they would have first consulted their commentaries. Had he gone to the elite, they would have looked around to see if anyone was watching. Had he gone to the successful, they would have first looked at their calendars. So, he went to the shepherds. Men who didn't have a reputation to protect or an ax to grind or a ladder to climb. Men who didn't know enough to tell God that angels don't sing to sheep and that messiahs aren't found wrapped in rags and sleeping in a feed trough!"

The shepherds responded to all of this in four ways--

1. THEIR FIRST RESPONSE: THEY WERE SCARED TO DEATH!

These rough and ready guys were terrified at the appearance of the angel--and who wouldn't have been?

...they also realized they were in the presence of the Almighty

...they experienced His glory

...what was going to happen to them?

Then, as if they weren't already terrified, "a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel praising God...!"

...they probably fell flat on the ground

...they were momentarily immobile I'm sure!

But the angel assured them they had no reason to be fearful--the message they proclaimed was GOOD NEWS full of JOY!

2. THEIR SECOND RESPONSE: ACTION!

"Let's GO to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened!"

Note: they didn't go back to sleep!

...they didn't return to business as usual

...their lives were altered forever by the events of this evening

They heard the good news...
...they accepted that good news...
...they acted upon that good news
They left their sheep on the hillside and hurried towards Bethlehem.

3. THEIR THIRD RESPONSE: THEY BECAME EVANGELISTS

"They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen Him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart!"

They couldn't be contained...they HAD to tell others about this wonderful thing that had happened to them.

...the people who heard them were "amazed"
...people today are hardly amazed at anything
...but how can anyone understand what Christmas is all about and not be amazed?
The good news they were told was that a Savior had been born...Christ, the Lord!
...God entered the human scene by sending His beloved Son to community His love
...to save us from our sins!
...our Savior!

The shepherds were amazed...and all who heard their testimony were amazed...and Mary "treasured up these things and pondered them in her heart!"

...her response is even beyond amazement!
...the last nine months were so incredible!
...and these shepherds? angels? amazing!

4. THEIR FOURTH RESPONSE: THEY RETURNED GLORIFYING AND PRAISING GOD!

Let me tell you--anyone who comes into contact with the living Christ will glorify and praise God!

...they returned to the same fields
...their circumstances remained the same
...but they had seen Jesus
...they had encountered Christ the Lord!
...they were changed men!

CONCLUSION

Have you met Jesus, the Christ?

...have you personally encountered Him in your life?
...have you discovered Him as Savior?
...proclaimed Him as Lord?
...if you haven't...what a great Christmas this can be for you!

You need not fear Him...

...He came to earth because He loves you!
...He came to save you!
...He came to offer life--abundant, eternal life!

Come to Bethlehem tonight...right here in San Jose...and discover this thing that has happened!

...receive Him...give Him room in your heart
...worship Him
...come...let US adore Him!