

Sermon Discussion

19 December 2021

Read Luke 2:8-20

Dig Deeper

Shepherds were socially looked down upon in Jesus' day. Their work made them **ceremonially unclean**, and they had a reputation for being untrustworthy. So, it's fair to say that God first sent the gospel to the lowly.

Throughout the Old Testament God used shepherds as **symbols** of those who cared for His people (*Psalm 23:1; Isaiah 40:11; Jeremiah 23:1-4*). Consequently, these shepherds represent all people of lowly origin and reputation who receive the gospel by God's grace and proclaim it joyfully to others.

Significant terms characteristic of Luke's Gospel occur in the angel's announcement indicating its importance. These include "*bring good news*," "*joy*," "*people*," "*today*," "*Saviour*," "*Lord*," and "*glory*." This angelic announcement is a seedbed for important ideas that Luke traces through the rest of this book.

The term "**swaddling clothes**" translates the Greek word *spargano* meaning "to swathe" or "wrap." The Jews wrapped their dead in strips of cloth, as they did their infants. For them, a birth was a reminder of the death that would inevitably follow one day.

The oft-sung translation "**good will toward men**" is not a good one, and it is misleading. The reader could infer that God will be gracious to people who show good will to others suggesting that human merit is the basis of God's favour. The NIV translation "*peace to men on whom his favour rests*" is better. Those on whom God bestows His favour are those who experience His peace.

1. If you received amazing news, what is the first thing you would do? Who would you tell? What joy do you receive in sharing good news with other people who haven't heard it?
2. What three titles were given to Jesus in v. 11? What was significant about each of these?
3. Read Genesis 12:3. Why is the news of Jesus' birth good news for "all people"? In what sense did this fulfil God's promise to Abraham?
4. What does it take to have a God who is pleased with you (v. 14)? What difference should this make in our day-to-day experience?

5. The shepherds hurried to find Jesus (v. 16). Is meeting Jesus and finding time to be with Him a priority for you? What illustrates this in your life?
6. Compare and contrast the shepherds' response to Jesus (v. 15-16, 20), and to Mary's (v. 19) response. How do both responses reflect a posture of worship and submission to the gravity of Jesus' arrival?

Application & Prayer

- Is Christmas a time that is joyful or hard for you this year? No matter where you find yourself, what comfort is there to be found worshiping the Saviour of all people?
- It seemed obvious to the shepherds that they needed to take this news and share it. Is the same thing obvious to you? With whom will you share about the person of Jesus?
- Reflect on the implications of Luke 2:8-20 for your own life today. Consider what you have learned that might lead you to praise God, repent of sin, and trust in His gracious promises.