

The Christ Of Christmas Present

The Christmas Carol, Part 2

Luke 2:8-20

The progression from unbelief to faith to sharing.

Luke 2:8-21 ⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And 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 among those with whom he is pleased!"¹⁴

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

²¹ And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

Proposition: The progression from unbelief to faith to sharing.

1. Fear: We Fear What We Don't Know, But The News Is Good (8-10)

⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

- v. 8 "out in the field, keeping watch by night"
 - the fact that "field" was used points to the fact that Jesus wasn't born in the Winter and not on December 25th
 - Grazing in the field was done during late summer and early fall in the Northern hemisphere
 - In the winter, shepherds would not be watching flocks in the field at night – they would be in a pen or contained pasture, not an open field
 - One commentator says suggests from this evidence that Jesus was born in September of 3 B.C.
 - This is much earlier than the Magi who came around December of 2 B.C. or January of 1 B.C.
 - Shepherds were poor and spent all their time in the field watching sheep
 - The Wise Men were important people in their society
- What were the shepherd's afraid of? Why?

- The shepherds feared the appearance of an angel and a manifestation of God's glory
- **We can fear an unusual messenger – an angel of the Lord.**
 - An angel doesn't fit our scientific mind
 - But angels are **messengers**
 - Angels Proclaim God's Messages (Lk 1:11,26; Mt 28:5-7; Acts 1:11; 10:3)
 - *angelos* = messenger
 - birth of John & Jesus (Lk 1:11,26)
 - foretold to Cornelius that a message of hope was on its way (Acts 10:3)
 - resurrection (Mt 28:5-7)
 - 2nd Coming (Acts 1:11)
 - John Calvin wrote: "Angels are the dispensers and administrators of the divine beneficence toward us. They regard our safety, undertake our defense, direct our ways, and exercise a constant solicitude that no evil befall us."
- **We fear God's glory**
 - A holy God intimidates a wretched sinner
 - An omnipresent God intimidates a limited individual
 - A sovereign God intimidates an independent rebel
 - Have you ever wondered why people shy away from talking about religion?
 - Some don't want to get into an argument
 - Some believe faith is private
 - Some are just in fear of dealing with a God greater than us
- **We can fear bad news – but the news is good!**
 - Ie/ I fear the inspectors denying our permit to meet this Tuesday
 - Ie/ we fear a bad diagnosis from the doctor
 - Ie/ we fear death
 - Ie/ we should fear judgment (court of law and God's court)
- **Man's greatest fear should be spending forever in hell because of our sin**
 - Jesus came to save us from that
 - That's the Good News
- That is how the Shepherd's fear will turn to joy

2. Comprehension: We Understand How And Why The Savior Came To Save Us (11-14)

¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And 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 among those with whom he is pleased!"

- "For unto you" – Jesus came personally for the shepherds and us
 - A Savior has come for all people

- The Shepherds were not that important in the status of the ancient middle east
 - But Jesus came for them came to worship Jesus
 - Jesus was born to be their Savior
- Hebrews 2:16-17** “For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. There, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

Galatians 4:4-5 “God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

- “If Jesus Christ is not true God, how could He help us? If He is not true man, how could He help us?” Dietrich Bonhoeffer

3. Faith: Seek To Know If It's True And Believe (15-16)

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

- The Shepherds went to see baby Jesus
- They knew He was born to be their Savior
- What are you going to do with the Good News that Jesus was born to be our Savior?
- Will you believe in Christ – cross, died for sin, resurrection?

Faith Involves:	Understanding	Knowledge of Facts
	Emotional	Confidence in the Truth
	Will	Commitment through Trust

- “Saving faith is composed of information, intellectual assent, and personal trust.” (Sproul, *Essential Truths*, p. 187)
- “This [act of faith] may be defined as an understanding of and mental assent to certain basic facts concerning the person and work of Christ culminating in a committal of one” entire being to the person of whom those facts testify.” (Horne, p. 49)
- Berkhof describes the 3 elements as:
 - 1) Intellectual (*notitia*)
 - 2) Emotional (*assensus*)
 - 3) Volitional (*fiducia*)

a. Knowledge:

Hebrews 11:6 ⁶But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

- Some religious folks claim “It doesn’t matter what you believe in as long as you’re sincere.”
- There is a difference between knowing facts and believing facts

b. Acceptance:

Hebrews 11:1 ¹Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

c. Trust:

ie/ When you sit in a chair: know there is a chair there; determine its strength; sit in it

ie/ When you purchase a car: find out knowledge of the car (flier, commercial, visit dealership); determine reliability (Consumers Reports, talk to other owners); then obtaining it (acting on your knowledge and trust)

ie/ Building inspection – trust everything works

- The day I trusted Christ, I knew I wouldn’t be able to save myself. I had a lot of questions, but there was no question that I needed a Savior.

4. Share: When We Know How Great The News Is, We Want To Tell Others (17-20)

¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- 95% of American church members never lead a soul to Christ
- 75 to 90 percent of new believers come to Christ through a friend or acquaintance who explains the good news on a one-to-one basis.
- Only 17 percent of all conversions come through what is called an “event”—a pastor giving his Sunday morning message, a Billy Graham crusade, or a Friendship Sunday. (Shepherd, Linda Evans; Fay, William (2010-07-19). *Share Jesus Without Fear* (Kindle Locations 340-342). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition)
- The Shepherds didn’t keep the good news to themselves
- They had to tell others
- Ie/ Don’t we like to share great things in our lives on an Instagram post?
- Ie/ If we like to post a picture or a great meal, why not share about Jesus Christ?
- Ie/ If your family was given Disneyland, wouldn’t you want to tell people?
- Ie/ If your favorite sports team won the championship, wouldn’t you want to tell people?
- If Jesus died for your sin so you can be a friend of God and live in His heaven, wouldn’t you want to tell people?

Conclusion:

- Overcome your fears about knowing God and His love for you
- Take a look at why Jesus was born to be our Savior
- Place your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Savior of your sins
- Share the good news with others

Discussion:

- What was your greatest fear about God before knowing Him?
- What's the best way people can learn about Jesus?
- How do the shepherds encourage us in evangelism?