



Shepherds Tell the Good News

Devotion

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" 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." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them (Luke 2:8–20).

Can you imagine Mary gazing into Jesus' eyes after waiting so expectantly for her precious child? How happy, yet mystified, she must have felt with this tiny, wiggly, new life. He looked like other babies, but she knew He was special. Surely she was excited to show Him off, but she knew no one around her. Whom could she tell?

God had that all planned. He sent His divine messengers to some scrubby, smelly shepherds out in the field. The dark sky lit up like daytime, an angel appeared, and then a whole host of angels proclaimed, "Glory to God in the Highest!" As they concluded their praises, the shepherds looked at each other wondering how to respond. Suddenly, they knew. They sped into town to find this precious baby. How happy Mary and Joseph must have been to show them the newborn Jesus. And what joy must have filled the shepherds' hearts.

How do you envision a shepherd? Is it someone in a pageant costume, with matching head scarf and sash? Or one who stands in a field, quietly overseeing his flock? Maybe at times he'll carry a lamb up a hill or bend down and scratch one's woolly head. These pastoral scenes are a very cleaned-up view. Shepherds were neither highly educated nor respected. Many shepherds, like David, began their career as young boys. One probably did not list shepherds as references when applying for most jobs. And, since they hung around their sheep, and most likely did not shower often, they did not smell good at all. Yet, these were the first people to receive word of Jesus' birth. God chooses even the lowly to accomplish His purposes.

Somewhere, perhaps at their mothers' knees or from their father's teachings, these men knew the prophecies of Jesus' coming. They were amazed at the angel's message and ran to see the infant Jesus. Filled with joy, they couldn't keep the message to themselves. They told everyone they could find that the Messiah had been born. As they returned to their flocks, they glorified God and praised Him for all that they had seen and heard.

Are you like the shepherds? How has knowing Jesus changed you? Do you believe He is God's Son, come down to show us how to live, to love, to forgive, and to serve? Do you

believe His crucifixion paid for your sin? Has God given you joy and peace within your soul through the faith He gives you in Jesus the Savior? Then **you** can be a shepherd! Go, tell, witness! Share God's love. Show your joy. Tell others about your Savior. Tell them what He has done for you. Wear a Christian symbol or a Christmas pin as a means to start a conversation. Post Bible verses and Christ-centered messages on social media. Invite a friend to worship. God's works through His people to grow His kingdom. To whom will you run and share the Good News today?

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son to redeem us. Open our eyes to those around us who need to know the Good News of Jesus our Savior. Give us joyful hearts that are eager to share the message of Jesus' saving love with others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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