The "Exciting" SHBC

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Dr. Howard E. Anderson, Sr. - Founding & Senior Pastor



Week 4: Believe in the Gospel

Scripture: Luke 2: 8-18

[10] Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. [11] For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."

LUKE 2: 10-12

Shepherds were at the bottom of the social hierarchy. They were outcasts, workers, people nobody listened to. The most important news in human history didn't first come to the priests or the scholars or the powerful. It came to shepherds tending sheep in the dark, in the cold, in the country. Gabriel told them the Messiah was here - not in the temple, not in a palace, but in an animal's feeding trough. This week, we encounter the moment ordinary, overlooked people were invited to meet God - and discover that the greatest gift in history was always meant for all of us, not just some of us.

Think: The Gospel is God's good news for everyone, and it requires a response.

Feel: Grateful and amazed at the amazing grace of God.

Do: Receive it, remember it, and proclaim it.

POINT #1: THE GOSPEL IS FOR EVERYONE

In Luke 2, God gives the greatest announcement in human history. The Messiah has arrived. The Savior has been born. God has come into the world. So, who does God tell first? Not the Roman governor. Not the religious leaders. Not the wealthy. Not the powerful. He tells shepherds. The book of Luke gives us a glimpse into what was happening as Jesus was being born.

Read Luke 2:8-9

Outside of Bethlehem there were shepherds, outcasts from society, living in fields. Shepherding was hard, dirty work. It meant long hours outside. It meant sleeping in the elements. It meant dealing with animals all day and all night. And shepherds lived on the margins of society.

Read Luke 2:10-12

Did you hear what the angel said? Do not be afraid. I bring "Good news." That's the Gospel.

The word Gospel literally means Good News. And notice who this good news is for. The Bible says, "For all people." Not some people. Not just important people. Not just religious people. Not just wealthy people. Not people who have their lives together. All people. Everyone. But the shepherds didn't just hear the "good news" of the Gospel. They decided what they were going to do with it. Because hearing good news and believing good news are two different things. Look at what happens next.

Read Luke 2:13-15

I love what the authors tell us about in this last sentence. The shepherds say, "Let's go." The shepherds heard the news, and they did something about it. They didn't ignore it. They didn't wait to pray about it. They didn't make plans to do what they were told a month later. They said: "Let's go!"

Discussion Question: Why, in your opinion, is the Gospel so hard to believe; so difficult to share?



POINT #2 – THE GOSPEL REQUIRES A RESPONSE

The Gospel isn't just information to acknowledge. It's Good News to receive. You can know the Christmas story and still miss Jesus. You can know who Mary was. You can know who Joseph was. You can know about the manger. You can know the Christmas songs. And still never respond to the Gospel. Because Christianity isn't simply believing that Jesus existed. ***It's believing that He came to rescue us***. It's trusting Him. It's receiving what He has done. It's recognizing that the baby in the manger is the Savior who came for us. The shepherds heard the announcement. And then they went looking for Jesus.

Read Luke 2:16-18

The Gospel is not simply about knowing that God has given us a gift. The Gospel is about receiving the gift God has given us in Jesus. The shepherds didn't stay in the field talking about the announcement. They went to see Jesus. The question today is not, "Do you know the Christmas story?" The question is, "Have you responded to the Christmas story?" Have you received Jesus? Have you trusted Him? Have you surrendered your life to Him? Because the Gospel requires a response. And look at what happens when they get there.

They went to Bethlehem, and they found exactly what Gabriel had told them they would find. A baby. Wrapped in cloth. Lying in a manger. Think about that for a moment. They had been told they were going to see the Savior. The Messiah. The Lord. And when they finally arrive, they don't find a king sitting on a throne. They don't find a palace. They don't find anything that looks impressive. They find a baby. And then Luke tells us that they make known what had been told to them about this child. They can't keep it to themselves. They've seen Jesus. And now they have to tell somebody.

Discussion Primer: Some would argue that Christmas story is for children; has the Gospel ever become "ordinary" to you? What helps you remember again how incredible the Gospel really is?

POINT #3 – THE GOSPEL IS TOO GOOD TO KEEP TO YOURSELF

The shepherds couldn't keep quiet. They had encountered the Savior. And now they had something to say. The shepherds told everyone what had happened. Think about how unlikely these messengers were. They weren't trained theologians. They didn't have seminary degrees. They weren't pastors. They didn't have a platform. They didn't have a podcast. They were shepherds. But they had encountered Jesus. They simply told people what they had seen. And that's what makes the Gospel so powerful. You don't have to know everything to tell somebody what Jesus has done for you.

That's what happens with the shepherds. They've experienced something so incredible that they can't keep it to themselves. And maybe one of the simplest questions we could ask ourselves this Christmas is am I still amazed by the Gospel? When the Gospel becomes old news to us, we stop sharing it. When Jesus becomes ordinary to us, we stop talking about Him. When grace becomes familiar, we stop being amazed by it. But the Gospel is not ordinary news. God became flesh. The Creator entered His creation. The Savior came for sinners. God came looking for people who could never save themselves. That's good news.

IMPLICATIONS & ACTIONS

So, as we consider all this, maybe today there are three responses for us.

First, receive the Gospel. If you've never put your faith in Jesus, today can be the day. You don't have to have everything figured out. You don't have to understand everything. Jesus is waiting, so, turn to Him, talk to Him and trust in Him.

Second, remember the Gospel. For those of us who have followed Jesus for years, don't let the Gospel become ordinary. Don't let Christmas become something you simply repeat every year. Stop and remember that God came for you. You are loved. You are forgiven.

And third, proclaim the Gospel. The shepherds couldn't keep it to themselves. Neither should we. There is somebody in your life who needs to hear the Good News. Somebody who needs to hope. Somebody who needs grace. Because the greatest gift in history was never meant to be kept by a few. It was always meant for all of us.

