

Shepherds on Christmas Day

Christmas

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Bible Text: Luke 2:8-20; Psalm 98
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Congregation, I'd like to go over verses 1 through 17 of Luke 2 about the shepherds. Let me only read now verse 16.

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

So far. "Shepherds on Christmas day," that's the theme for tonight. Shepherds on Christmas day. Three thoughts: shepherds visited, shepherds addressed by an angel, and shepherds finding the Savior. So we go over those verses 1 through 17, first the shepherds visited, then the shepherds addressed, talked to, spoken to, and then the shepherds finding the Savior.

Silent night. Holy night. Was it really a silent night? Does it mean silent night? What do you mean? Well, at night it's not so busy as during the day. So maybe that sense in that night, in that night that the Lord Jesus came and it was quiet? Maybe. Was it not windy at all? I don't know. But I don't experience the hustle and the bustle of town and of children playing. It's kind of quiet at night. Silent night. But although silent, let us not fool ourselves, it was war. The Roman Empire had occupied the country of Israel, and they were not happy about that. The advantage was all the borders are open. All the borders open and that's why the gospel could be spread so easily. Like a virus, it was spread so fast. In a couple of years, the gospel was heard in the whole known world at that time because all the doors are open. All the borders are open. No limits.

Silent night. Well, what about the wild animals at night? Were they quiet? You didn't hear the wolves howling? There were wolves that time in Israel and the wild dogs coming in packs and attacking people. So silent night, but also dangerous night, and that's why the shepherds are abiding in the field, keeping watch over the flock by night because all was silent and maybe they started thinking, I don't know, let us not make it too romantic and idyllic, they had to watch the flock because of those wolves and those wild dogs and even people could steal them. So they were on their guard and kept their eyes open. There was a fire burning and they looked around and they listened if they did not hear something suspicious.

So I would say in that night, not something special, but it was at night and that might have a spiritual meaning, that might have a deeper purpose, that those angels came in the night because the night in the Bible is the time of darkness, the time of hopelessness, the time of animosity and danger and fear. Also in this regard, we read in Matthew 4, the people which sat in darkness saw a great light. I don't think that is talking about those shepherds in particular, but in general the people sitting in darkness see the great light of the gospel. To them that sat in the region of the shadow of death, light has sprung up, that's the quotation in Mark 14 of Isaiah 9. And of course, you know Psalm 23, right? It's one of the most well-known Psalms in the Bible and you know that sentence, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." So I think, I wouldn't be surprised if those shepherds at night there, and that's why the Lord Jesus revealed himself at night and why the angels came that night to show light and hope in the darkness.

One more text regarding this, Isaiah 50, that's an important word, I like that. "Who is among you that feareth the LORD, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light?" But now, if they fear the Lord, obey his voice, but they walk in darkness, they have no light, "let him trust in the name of the LORD, and stay upon his God." In the darkness, that's not so easy in the darkness. When there's light, trust him in his light, that's easy. When it's dark, it's dark and you feel it's so dark and then to trust.

Silent night. Holy night. Yes, it was a holy night. This was the day that God has chosen as one of the most special days ever to contrast with the black page in Genesis 3, we talked about that there was an awful night, an awful day when mankind departed from God and declared war. But this is a special night and many people have been looking forward to that day. "When is the day coming? When? I hope tomorrow, next week, next month, soon." Like Jacob who was dying and confessed in Genesis 49, "I have waited for thy salvation, O Lord." That was his life, waiting for that salvation, that Jesus would come. And you know Simeon, right? A man in Jerusalem, the same man was just and devout and he was waiting for the consolation of Israel.

So many are waiting for that day of consolation, the day of comfort. Think of Anna, "she coming in that instant gave likewise thanks unto the Lord and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption." So many in Jerusalem are looking for that redemption in Jerusalem of the Lord, that the day would come and Joseph of Arimathea, a counselor, was waiting for the kingdom of God to appear. And there were more of them in town, waiting people. But those shepherds, I wonder, were they also waiting, hoping? Did they have the expectation, "Someday we may see him"? I hope so. Was it also in their heart with all of them or a few of them or none of them? You know, I wouldn't be surprised. Over the years, my thoughts have been wandering from one side to the other side and I'm still not completely sure what those shepherds were like. Sometimes I have the feeling that they were God's people already, and sometimes I think probably not. So you will feel also in this sermon that I'm a little bit ambiguous about them.

So were they alive spiritually? Were they waiting for Christ to come? Were they hoping for this day? Again, I wouldn't be surprised if they would belong to that people, to that circle of people like Zacharias and Elizabeth and Mary and Joseph and Simeon and Anna, all those people in the first chapter of the gospel. So are they an exception to all those? So they all know the Lord and they were waiting for the Lord, and they were not. It's possible that either way, either way they have been visited by the Lord and it's remarkable though that I don't read that they were such good people. They were not righteous and holy and just and waiting for the consolation of Israel. I don't read anything about that. Nothing. And that might be on purpose. I think that's on purpose. That's of course on purpose; there are no mistakes in the Bible, that you won't think, "Oh, the Lord came to those shepherds because they were worthy of it. Of course he went there. They're such nice men." To prevent that to happen, the Lord has been quiet about those men and we don't know anything about him but this, that God visited them, that the angel came to them.

Holy night, the night of God's good pleasure, and the emphasis is on that one side of the work of God and not about those nice shepherds, those kind men in the field. No, the emphasis is not on their piousness and their religion, the emphasis is on the darkness and the light shining in the darkness. It's also remarkable though that the angel did not appear to priests and the high priest, or the Sanhedrin and the rulers and the important people and the rich ones. No, he came to the shepherds. That's again typically the Bible and typically the work of Christ to look for the poor and the not so important and the average people.

Holy night. Many were not waiting and were content without a Savior. Many did not care. Many were sleeping, literally and spiritually, or I should say dead in sin. But those shepherds, you know the thoughts, were sitting there together at night, keeping watch over the flock, and I don't know, are those sheep their sheep, do they own them or are they employed by their boss? I don't know. Were they poor? Were they rich? Some shepherds own their own sheep and they're rich, really affluent people. Now we know that Egyptians did not like shepherds. They looked down on them. They were outcasts. Was it also in Israel? Some say so, I'm not convinced but I am inclined to think that those shepherds were not office people, right, were using the pen the whole day but they were men, always outside, weathered, strong.

And when they were sitting there or standing there or walking around there, there's suddenly a light, a bright light, and there's always something I haven't seen before, it says that that light is shining round about them. Round about them, that light. So I look at what it says in the Greek, and it says, perilampo. Lampo, that sounds about right, lamp, lampo, light. Peri, around them. So this perilampo is light from all sides. Not only in front of them, but to the side, but everywhere. And they must have felt unprotected. "I can't escape. What's happening?" They're placed in the center, in the middle of the light and they are petrified. They feel paralyzed. Those big men feel kind of mortal and vulnerable and weak and, "What can we do?" And they must have been shaking and having felt dependent upon the Lord.

You know that impression of God's majesty, right, the majesty of God and John Calvin, our Reformer, writes about that and he says something to the extent of, we need that. We need to be shocked out of our comfort zone. We need to tremble. We need to be disarmed first otherwise we don't listen. We need affliction. We need problems in this life. We need a firm hand. We need someone shaking us and waking us up. I like that. That's the Bible, right? We are falling asleep and we need the hand of God to wake us up. "Wake up, man, out of your dead sleep. Awake thou that sleepest, rise from the dead." And those shocking experiences can be quite helpful and can be quite healthy and those shepherds there are in shock.

But again something, and the glory of the Lord shone all about them, right? The glory of the Lord. "And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them." So per ilampo, what, the angels? Are the angels surrounding them? No, the glory. The glory of God shone round about them. What is that, the glory? Now you know what it is to give glory, right? That's to honor God. But that's different from here. That's also the doxa from doxology, right? Doxa means glory. But sometimes the doxa means God's presence, right? The glory of God on the tabernacle indicating his presence. Or think of the book of Ezekiel, that the glory of the Lord was taken away from Jerusalem and left. That's something else than the glory we give to God, what we are supposed to give to God. That's God's presence.

So the Lord manifested himself. The Lord appeared unto them, in a sense. It's not only the angels, it's the glory of God round about them, and I'm sure those shepherds have understood that. God is dealing with them, not just angels, the Almighty God and what, really, congregation is, that when the Lord works and influences people and gives people a new heart, and when he changes people and leads people and guides people and comforts people, he does it in such a way that first he humbles them, right? Believing in the Bible is not just a happy-go-lucky believing. That's not what it is. The believing in the Bible is something with that dark background of rejoice with trembling, Psalm 2. It's rejoicing, yes, and feeling privileged and blessed, "I feel so small. God is so great. He's so majestic. I have nothing to say. I feel so tiny. I feel so unworthy. The Lord could do anything with me. I'm dust and ashes. I'm vile and sinful." And then against that background, the Lord says, "Yes, I know, but I'm gracious and I know you." And then that big surprise of people, that they were shaking, and then the Lord saying, "Fear not."

Second thought: shepherds addressed. They were so afraid, verse 9, "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold," look, think, consider, "I bring you good tidings of great joy." To bring good tidings is one word in Greek, to evangelize. Bring good tidings of great joy, of joy, of great joy, "which shall be to all people." Fear not. Quite a few times in the Bible, fear not, because the Lord wants people to fear but not too much. It's healthy to fear, to tremble and to feel dependent, to feel small, but not too much and not too long.

Fear not, examples. Think of Jairus. Jairus' daughter was sick and died, and his servant said to him, "Don't bother the Master anymore because she has passed away." And the Lord Jesus said to him, when Jesus heard it, he said, he answered him and said, "Fear not. Believe only and she shall be made whole." Jairus on purpose the Lord let the child die.

On purpose so he would be devastated and then against the background, "Don't fear. Only believe and she'll be fine." That's typically how the Lord works.

Or think of every hair of your head is numbered. "Fear not, therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." So the Lord Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, expressing it to his church, "Fear not, your hairs are numbered, you're better, of more value than sparrows are. Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

And, of course, you think of John, the evangelist, on Patmos, Revelation 1. He saw Jesus in his majesty and he fell at his feet as dead. He's just devastated, you know, seeing God, seeing Jesus. You don't survive that. You feel kind of that's the end. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, "And fear not, I am the first and the last." You know, that's so often in the Bible. Actually, believing in the Bible is often called fearing. A God-fearing people. To fear the Lord that is not to be petrified and be scared of him, but have that deep feeling of his Majesty and depending upon him and respecting him and highly esteeming him.

Fear not. Why not? All those are unforgettable moments in the hearts, in the lives of God's people. You may have experienced it as well, that the Lord spoke to you, and you just feared God, and you just thought, "There's no salvation for me. There's no hope for me." Not only circumstances are against you, it's your own heart against you, your own conscience telling you, "You don't measure up. You can't be saved. You don't go to heaven, you go to hell, straight to hell." And then through the Bible and the message to fear not, that's wonderful. And then God speaks, "Fear not. I want to be there for you. I want to be your Savior."

So look at those shepherds. "Behold. Behold, for, behold," behold meaning pay attention. It means don't ignore this. Let it sink in, man. "Shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. Behold, I bring you good tidings. I bring you good tidings. I evangelize. I bring you a special message. A good message. Not a bad one, but a good one of great joy." Sometimes in the Bible we read about joy, a few times about great joy. Absolutely great joy a few times in more extreme circumstances. And so the angel is talking about great joy for you.

"I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." That's a difficult point, how to translate that, and then you look at different translations in different languages, Dutch and German and English, some of them have something close to this and others say, "which shall be to all THE people." All the people, singular, not people in general, but his people, right? "And, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people, to all my people." And where "the" is in the Greek. It's there. So, I don't want to leave it out. I would like to put it back in and I think that's also what is meant, a great joy which shall be to all the people, and that corresponds with verse 14, if I may. Verse 14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Same problem. I would translate not goodwill towards men, but to men of God's goodwill. See

the difference? Not goodwill to all people, to every individual on earth, but great joy it shall be to all his people, namely the people of his pleasure, the people of his goodwill.

Now search for yourself and look it up in commentaries and see what's happening. You know, I don't disagree, there's also a message to all people, right? Of course. There's also a message to anyone who wants to hear it, a message of salvation to all people of the whole world. Let's preach the possibility of salvation, the Lord warning and inviting and calling people, also called the gospel, right? There's no question about that. And don't forget that. But here it is in particular. The Lord says to those people, to those angels, "I will give my people that great joy. I will not only talk about it, I will give it. I will not only preach it, I will work it. I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people. All my children." All the believers will have that. I think that's what it means. Although, again, it's preached to all.

So who are those people? The people of his good pleasure. The people of his good will. The people of his good will are the people chosen from eternity. God from eternity has had in mind who to save and he will save. He does not depend upon people. He does not say, "Well, I offer you salvation, but it's up to you. If you want it, I can help you." If that would be the message today, if that would have been the message in the past for me, "I want to save you, young man, but you need to want it as well," I would have been lost because I didn't want it. I didn't want it. I kept my eyes open during prayer in church and in school. I didn't care. So that's lost. God says, "I work, and if I am first, I'm first and last, and I will save a people from their sins for myself, and they are the people." The people of his good pleasure, chosen by God for no reason. I said, for no reason. No, the Lord did not foresee who they were and foresee their faith. No, he has given them faith, right? And he has made them willing. And still, everyone is responsible. I don't mean it in a fatalistic way.

So those shepherds, when you look at those verses, the people and the men of his goodwill, you would think that they belonged to those people, right? I wouldn't be surprised. But you know, although they, let me say, belonged to that people, they did not feel that they deserved anything. They did not pay for it. They received it as free grace. "For unto you is born." Unto you is born, that sounds also quite personal. "Unto you is born his day," the holy day, "in the city of David, a Savior, a Savior which is Christ the Lord." He's born the Savior, the Messiah, someone who delivers.

Savior, being saved from what? You know, people in a storm on the ocean, that ship goes up and down and just takes water in and hardly makes it and maybe the ship breaks or capsizes and people need to be saved out of the water, out of the mighty waters and those waves. I am stunned how people can do that with helicopters and people going down in harnesses and lifting them up out of the sea. It's amazing. They need to be saved from the water. But that's nothing compared to our salvation because we are in the waters, because anger, God is by nature against us. We have sinned against him. We need to be saved from God. Yes, God warns you for God. God says, "Watch me. Think of me, I'm coming." And on the other side God says, "There is salvation. I can rescue you." And that's through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

So salvation is necessary to be saved from the greatest misery, namely my sin, and to be saved, being delivered unto righteousness, to be forgiven and to be restored with God. Salvation. You know, Zacharias, right, Zacharias in the first chapter, saying about that, "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins." See, that's the problem, to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, do you see that? His people, "unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

So then you lay Luke 1 verse 77 through 79 next to this, you're just convinced Savior means being saved from sin. Do you need to be saved from sin? Do you still all have your sins on your neck? Are you unforgiven? There's one or the other. Everything has been forgiven. All your sins, everything has been forgiven, or nothing. What is it? Maybe you say, "Well, I can't say, I don't dare to say, I'm not so sure if all my sins have been forgiven. All of them, you mean?" Yes, all of them. You say, "I can't say that," but you know, that is available in Christ, the forgiveness, the remission of your sins, through the tender mercies of our God, to give light to them that sit in darkness, in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace, because we don't know where to go or what to do. He is guiding people, our feet into the way of peace, peace with God.

You know, whatever you think of Christmas, whatever you think of the importance of it, that's the heart, that's the sweetest thing there is, the forgiveness of your sins. The Lord says, "I bought them all out." That's why the Lord Jesus came to say, "I will be born, so I will be instead of a sinner. I will do the work for you. I will obey, because you didn't obey. I will obey everything because you sinned against all my commandments." So he's doing it all over. He's doing it perfectly and he's doing it willingly, and he restores with God and makes reconciliation. Not only forgiveness, he brings the sinner and God together. He is, as the mediator, the mediator brings God and sins in harmony again. You know, if you don't care for forgiveness, if that's not a tender point for you, then you're probably foiled on account, probably not saved.

"Unto you is born this day in the city of David the Savior, which is Christ." Christ means Messiah. Messiah means anointed. Anointed means, well, anointed to be a prophet, and anointed to be a king, and anointed to be a priest, to have all those offices and to do the work. To do the work, that's Messiah, Christ, the Lord, the exalted one,

"And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." So the angels gave also direction, direction in the sense of you probably are going to look for him, and if you look for the Savior, look for someone, for the babe, not only wrapped in swaddling clothes, but also laying in a manger, lying in a manger. Now, that being wrapped in swaddling clothes is not my concern. I mean, that's not the worst thing. I understand that all children were wrapped in clothes, in swaddling clothes, just pieces of cloth, just neatly put around them. So again, that happened to all the people. They did not have baby clothes those days. But talking about that, the Savior needed to be dressed because he could be cold, right? So apparently he is really human.

He could catch a cold. He needs to be fed. He needs a bath. He needs everything. He's just a real, real child, a real baby. Nothing mysterious. You won't see it, you won't see anything. Just normal, equal to his people in all things except sin.

But lying in a manger. I'm sure that Mary and Joseph cleaned that thing out a little bit. But then, who does that, to have no cradle, to have no little bed, but a feeding trough and then putting the baby in there. That's not normal. That's strange. But apparently it was not the place but what else should they do? And that became the issue. And the shepherds didn't care about that. Whether in a manger or in a palace or in a stable or in a cave or whatever it was, as long as we have him, as long as we see him. And they were not after a special reception and honor and photographs and big festival and celebration. No, they didn't care about that. But it's okay with them.

"And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." So why would they go? In order to seek salvation. And you know, I read this sentence in one of the commentaries, the Lord Jesus in the manger is so revolting that it easily produces an aversion to Christ, and I think that's right. So hearing about the Savior in the manger easily, easily produces aversion. Kind of, "I don't need that." I think people like temples and gold and silver and wealth and pomp like when you go to Rome or so, you see those, the Vatican and all those, all those artifacts and so wealthy. That's what people like. Not here.

"He shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form, nor comeliness and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not." That's a quote from Isaiah 53, and it might still be true for you. You see no beauty in that, that you despise it, reject it, no use for that, in a manger. Our worldly heart doesn't like that. Although I have to admit that some people have romanticized this, have made it kind of tender, and emotional, and yet wrong. What do I mean? Well, I heard from a Dutch newspaper not long ago of someone who had been going to a Roman Catholic type of church and then she came to her grandparents and parents as well, and aunt as well, I believe. They had a nativity set in the corner of the room at home with some figures, a little stable, and Joseph, and Mary, and the manger, and then the little baby there. And then the children and the grandchildren came over, then Oma went with the kids to the nativity scene, and just pointed out to them, and then they're able, they were allowed to take the baby out of the cradle, the baby in their hand with a baby close to their heart, and to kiss the baby. And some cried. Some cried. But that's something I have no use for. That's just emotion. That's not knowledge of Jesus. That's just our tender heart. Our mother heart, our child's heart, has nothing to do with forgiveness of sins so you don't need that. I think that distracts from the truth. So, I may preach you the Savior, that should be enough. He came to seek and to save them that were lost, to take refuge unto him who revealed himself in the Bible.

"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, good will toward men." So

free choir performance. They did not have to pay. They didn't have to get a ticket. They just didn't have to travel for that, they were just there and they heard. Yeah, some say not chanting and just talking. I have a hard time believing that angels, even when they talk it's almost singing, isn't it? It must have been beautiful and perfect. Even if they were just chanting, it was the choir and they were just in tune and made the most beautiful music and spoke and sang to the honor and glory of God, because that's the purpose of all things. The purpose of salvation and the purpose of creation, the purpose of everything God does is his glory, his honor, his doxa. Glory to God in the highest.

So, that is also the real joy. What is the real joy? The real joy is to have the lowest thought of self and the highest thoughts of God and Jesus and just enjoying God and loving Jesus and following him, having enough with him, be satisfied with him, content, completely content with Jesus in spite of all your sins. What a wonder! And they're giving glory to God, were the angels. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host," a host, an army, "praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace," on earth harmony between God and men, "good will toward men," to the men of his goodwill.

Shepherds visited, shepherds talked to, addressed, shepherds finding the Savior. First we sing.

Conjugation, I don't know for how long those shepherds have been watching and listening, five minutes, ten, half an hour, I don't know, but "it came to pass as the angels were gone away from them back into heaven." So after a while of listening, the shepherds said one to another, conversing, "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste." So they have seen the angels disappearing and looked at each other and said, "Let's go." What about the sheep? What about the people having the other shift? What about coming home late? I don't think they had to think much, they just were so compelled, so desirous. They had such an expectation. They had to go there. They couldn't go home and they could not say on the way, "Maybe tomorrow." They could not procrastinate at all. It was now. "I want to go now."

So they made haste, haste. That's a couple of times in the gospel according to Luke. Mary rose in those days and went with haste into Judea to visit Elizabeth, so with a drive, with haste. And I read also in Luke 19 of Zacchaeus waiting in the tree and looking for Jesus, and Jesus came by and saw him and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house. And he made haste and came down and received him joyfully." So this kind of command here, don't you see that?

So this is not only what those shepherds did, they came with haste, it's also a recommendation in there for you to make haste, especially in case you are not prepared. To make haste before it is too late. "To make haste with what? What do you mean, pastor?" I mean making haste with confessing all the sins you remember. Tell them. Tell them. Pour out your heart to God. Tell him everything. Maybe people don't know, maybe hardly anyone knows, but you know it. Confess it. Say, "Lord, I did that. I said that. I

didn't do that, but I should have done." Confess it. Make haste by stopping it, by saying, "I don't want to do this anymore. I know it's wrong, so I quit," and have that dedication and that remorse that only the Holy Spirit works. I know but I have to say, "Repent, repent, turn, turning." Make haste with taking refuge to that Jesus in the Bible, seeking him, calling unto him. "Today, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart," the Bible says.

And they found the child, right, "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe alive in the manger." They saw him. They found him. It doesn't say how they felt. The Bible is very quiet about that but you can imagine. They believed in him before they found him, no? Right. Because they went unto that manger believing, right? And then they found him later. I think that is happening a lot. That's in a way happening all the time because we can't see the Lord Jesus anymore. He's in heaven. So there is still a people and they believe in him, although they haven't seen him because nobody can see him, but believe him in the word. Proof from the Bible? 1 Peter 1, "whom having not seen you love, in whom though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." So it is possible to not see him, to yet believe in him, to yet rejoice in him, to yet have unspeakable joy and glory, and yet not seeing him. Yes.

So you don't need to see that baby, that little doll you have. You don't need to see him. That distracts. But to see him in the Bible, and to have a longing to someday really see him. Like the Lord Jesus said to Thomas, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. That's easy. But blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." So, in a way, God's people today cannot see him the way the shepherds saw him. That's not in store for us here on earth, but even not in heaven because in heaven, the body of Jesus is there but God's people have only spiritual eyes there. But on the new earth, after the resurrection, after the second coming, when Christ comes, and then God's people really see him the same way as the shepherds saw him but there not as a baby, but as the victorious King of kings and Lord of lords.

So they found him in the manger, "And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child." You know, they stayed for a while, again, I don't know for how long, half an hour, an hour, half a day. But they had to go home. They couldn't stay there. Life continues. You know, like after a funeral, it's so hard. Life goes on. After conversion, you become a different person but life goes on. And you have received something special in the Bible for yourself, a kiss from God in the Bible, that the Lord embraced you, the Holy Spirit, but life goes on again. But those people, those shepherds, they couldn't keep their mouths closed. They had to talk about it. And they told anyone that wanted to listen to them. And 1 Thessalonians 1:8, "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing ourselves." The Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians a word of praise, "You have talked about it, you have witnessed in every place, in every place your faith to God-ward is spread broad." So I also see here a recommendation. Share it with others. If you are really happy and excited and something from God, being humbled and being glad with great joy, why keep it for yourself? Why don't you share it with others and say,

"You know, that is so special, that is something that is available, that is something the Lord wants to give," and be generous and show other people also that salvation.

The shepherds on Christmas day. They were visited by the angels, they were talked to by the angels, and they found the Savior. So, at the beginning of the service, we read Psalm 98 verse 4 and let me close with that verse that's kind of applicable also to this piece of the Bible. Psalm 98 verse 4, "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise." That's the joy, the best joy there is, being nothing in yourself and having joy in God and in that Savior who has revealed himself in the Bible, because the Bible is the cradle and the Lord Jesus is on every page. Amen.