

“The Gospel of Great Joy”

Luke 2: 8-20

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Reliving the excitement of the birth of our firstborn
- The selective announcement of the “Good News”

“The Gospel of Great Joy”

A. The Hearers of the Gospel – Luke 2:8-9

1. Shepherds-- a lowly occupation

- Luke 2:8-- *“Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.”*

a. Despised by men-- social outcasts

b. Exalted by God

1) God as shepherd

- Psalm 23:1-- *“The Lord is my shepherd! I shall not want!”*
- Isaiah 40:11-- *“He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those with young.”*

2) Jesus as Great Shepherd

- John 10:11-- *“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for His sheep!”*

3) Elders as shepherds

- 1 Peter 5:2-- *“Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers...”*

c. God’s choice

- 1 Corinthians 1:26-31-- *“For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.’”*

2. Shepherds in the fields, keeping watch over their flock

a. Christmas in December?

b. Appearance of the glory of the Lord and the angel of the Lord!

- Luke 2:9-- *“And behold, an angel of the LORD stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.”*

B. The Reasons for Joy-- Luke 2:10-14

- Luke 2:10-11-- *“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. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.’”*

1. A Grand PROMISE has been kept! “Born today”

a. Promise of the Messiah in the Old Testament

- Genesis 3:15-- *"will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."*
 - Deuteronomy 18:15-- *"The LORD your God will raise up a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear."*
 - Isaiah 9:6-7-- *"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end. Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."*
- b. **Prominence of the word "born"-- promise fulfilled**
- John 16:21-- *, "A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world."*
2. **A Great NEED has been met! " A Savior, Christ the Lord"**
- a. **Need caused by man's sinfulness**
- Isaiah 53:4-6-- *"surely has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, everyone, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all."*
- b. **Need of a permanent solution**
- Hebrews 9:26-- *"But now, once, at the end of the ages, He (that is, Christ) has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself."*
3. **A Glorious DISCOVERY will be made-- "You will find"**
- Luke 2:12-- *"And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloth, lying in a manger."*
- a. **The joy of finding what is lost-- Luke 15**
- Luke 15:6-- *"calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost.'"*
 - Luke 15:9-- *"she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece that was lost!'"*
 - Luke 15:22-24-- *"Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*
- b. **The sign-- lying in a manger**
- c. **The joyful anticipation by the angels**
- Luke 2:13-14-- *"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, goodwill toward men!'"*
 - Luke 15:7-- *"I say to you that likewise three will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."*
 - Luke 15:10-- *"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*

C. The Experience of Joy-- Luke 2:15-20

1. Come and See for yourself

- Luke 2:15-16-- *"So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the LORD has made known to us.' And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger."*

2. Share the Good News with others around you!

- Luke 2:17-18-- *"Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds."*

3. Worship and Praise God continually!

- Luke 2:20-- *"Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them."*