

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE
James M. Duncan, Pastor

DECEMBER 15, 2019

SERIES: PREPARE HIM ROOM

“GLORIFYING GOD”

Luke 2:8-20

Has Christmas become too predictable, too familiar, too forgotten? Have you heard the Christmas narrative so much it no longer astonishes you? Actually, this can be a dangerous time of the year for us. Our annual celebration of Christmas can immunize us to its reality.

I find it extremely interesting God chose to send the birth announcement about His Son in the middle of the night to some shepherds. They might have been sleepy, but they were not asleep. The first announcement of the Messiah's birth was given by an angel to some anonymous shepherds. Why shepherds? Why not to priests or scribes? By visiting the shepherds, the angel revealed the grace of God toward mankind. Shepherds were really outcasts in Israel. Their work not only made them ceremonially unclean, but it kept them away from the temple for weeks at a time so that they could not be made clean. God does not call the rich and mighty; He calls the poor and the lowly (**Luke 1:51-53; 1 Cor. 1:26-29**).

God has always worked wonders for the little, the least and the lost. If you were to read through Luke's entire narrative you would see he emphasizes how Jesus came for the marginalized, the poor, the forgotten and the outcasts.. The shepherds also went through a process. I see five steps they took.

I. WORKED FAITHFULLY

The first thing we see about these shepherds is they were attentive to their jobs. Listen to **Luke 2:8**. They were so committed to their career they never left their jobs. They not only worked the third shift; they pulled the first and second as well. This was a 24/7 deal for them.

Shepherds are not easily fooled. They are practical men of the world who have little to do with fantasy. If they said that they saw angels and went and found the Messiah, then you could believe them. God selected hardworking men to be the first witnesses that His Son had come into the world.

The King in the Cradle is the sacrificial substitute for our sins. Jesus is the Good Shepherd according to **John 10:11**: “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” John the Baptist declared in **John 1:29**, He is the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” Even at His birth, Jesus is seen as Sovereign and Sacrifice.

II. WONDERED FEARFULLY

While they were working faithfully at the responsibilities they were given, the shepherds were suddenly awed by an angelic announcement in **Luke 2:9**. God meets us where we are but then He brings us to our knees.

Maybe the shepherds were terrified because they didn't know if this was an angel of judgment or not. Perhaps they were worried their sins were catching up with them and they were about to be vaporized. To be “**sore afraid**” (as quoted by Linus in Charlie Brown's Christmas) or “**greatly afraid**” literally means, “**to fear with great fear.**” Whenever we come face-to-face with God's holiness, how can we not but fall apart because of our sinfulness?

God moves us through a specific process so we can make spiritual progress.

III. WELCOMED FAVORABLY

After the faithful shepherds were filled with fear, they favorably welcomed the message of good news of great joy look at **V-10**. The word “**behold**” means, “**Look now!**” I read something this week that really got my attention which is; “**Christianity's first call is not 'Behave!' but 'Behold!'**” Here's what I wrote down: “Christianity is not simply moralism. Once we behold, we will believe...and then we'll behave.”

We must remember this message “**will be for all people.**” That's why we have a Food Bank Ministry and give gifts to Operation Christmas Child and support over 15 missionaries. **Verse 11** contains the heart of the birth announcement.

After working faithfully, the shepherds wondered fearfully and then they welcomed favorably. The next step in their process was they witnessed frequently.

IV. WITNESSED FREQUENTLY

The shepherds went to see so they could witness what had taken place. Look at **Luke 2:16**. The idea behind “**haste**” is “**come on, hurry up, let's go!**” **This is the first Christmas rush!** This is pretty amazing because normally shepherds were slow and patient men to keep from scaring the sheep.

Look at **verse 17**. The phrase, “**made known**” means to “make known in such a way that people can understand.” **Verse 18** describes how the people responded. To “**wonder**” means, “to be amazed and astonished” and is used 12 times in Luke to show people's response to Jesus. Are you astonishingly amazed when you consider what Christ has done?

V. WORSHIPPED FONDLY

The shepherds went back to their same jobs, but they weren't the same on the inside. They returned to where they started and worked faithfully but now, they are worshipping fondly. Their extraordinary experience does not make them withdraw from the work God gave them to do.

We see this in **Luke 2:20**. They don't just wonder about what they saw, they worship Him whom they saw. A clear evidence of conversion is always adoration. Unfortunately, many of us worship our work, work at our play and play at our worship. When a person is genuinely saved, he or she will seek to bring glory to God and praise Him for who He is and what He has done.

Christmas is real history, but it must become your story. Luke loved to celebrate that Jesus came to save sleepy sinners. **Luke 19:10**:

**“For the Son of Man has come to seek
and to save that which was lost.”**