

Good News of Great Joy

SERMON - December 25, Christmas Day, 2020

Scripture reading: Luke 2:8-20

Golden verse: *“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”* Luke 2:10

The shepherds, heard the good news of the coming of Christ, the incarnation of the incarnation, the proclamation of the angel. And what did they do after that? This is what we are discussing today.

What did the shepherds do with the gospel? They heard the gospel, then became convinced that it was true, and then they proclaimed it to others.

1. First, we have to notice that they heard the good news, which was declared by the heavenly host. Dear beloved, it is such an amazing grace, that the Almighty God **speaks** to us and allows us to comprehend His thoughts. He talks to us and this is how we can learn about God’s great deeds and about His plans with us. When He declares something of Himself, He always wants to do something good in one’s life.

Are you grateful that the Almighty God is as close to you, and that He wants to talk to you, to His children? I have to tell you that everything good in my life was prepared in me and for me through the words of God. In listening to sermons, listening to my ministers and spiritual leaders, listening to the Holy Spirit, God was guiding me step by step. The Lord helped me to understand how much He loves me, and how close He wants me to be to Him. He told me His plans with me and He is guiding me even today, with His words, step by step. Listening to Him, I discovered more and more about Him and about myself. He made clear the tasks I have received from Him.

He seeks to talk to us, even this morning. On the first Christmas night, He came to the shepherds. It was not their merit to be a part of it. It is God’s grace that He has chosen you and me to hear His words. It is not our merit that, right now, we can listen to His words. It is a tremendous opportunity that He talks to us, as loving parents talk to their children.

So the shepherds heard the good news, but they had not seen exactly what happened.

2. But as a continuation, we read that: *“When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ So they hurried off...”* Luke 2:15-16

After the angels left them, they decided to go to the sheep stall. Without procrastination, they started their journey to Bethlehem. They did not hesitate, because they were convinced that what God’s angel told them had to be true. None of them said that: this would not apply to me, or it won’t make any changes in my life, so I am not going. None of them had the excuse that it is “bedtime” and let’s go tomorrow after we rest a bit ...or ... you should go and come back to tell me what you saw ...

There are many who have doubts in God, and what God proclaimed during throughout history. The major problem is not that we have doubts; the problem is that we don't challenge God. The problem is that we are not asking God to prove to us that it is true what He said.

These shepherds wanted to prove God's message. They heard the words of God and the message gave them curiosity, wisdom and energy to move.

The message, which was proclaimed on Christmas night, is extremely important for everyone. This message can give us a peaceful present and a prosperous future. Also, this message will bring us through our whole lives of challenges, until we will arrive to our final destination.

Please do NOT ask if the Christmas message is important for you, or not. Take it seriously, follow God's guidance, prove Him, and you will see this life from a new perspective.

There are people who know a lot about God, but they never invested time and energy to prove God. Get God to prove Himself in your life. But you have to do your part as well. Follow His direction and you will experience His surprises. Come with faith to the manger today, as you are, and I can promise, you will walk away filled with spiritual gifts, like never before. You will experience that you got much more than you could ever imagine. You will experience that God talked to you. He shared with you His good news.

God is asking you to come closer to the child of Bethlehem. Now the ball is in your court. It is up to you if you would start your journey. Christ Jesus is waiting for you, to meet Him and to shower you with His gifts.

We read that they *"found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger."* Luke 2:16 They found Him because they left the place where they were, and they did not stop or turn around until they found the newborn King. Don't stop; don't turn around. Come, and search for Him, and God will guide you to find Jesus today for the first time, or again.

3. *"When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them."* Luke 2:17-18

What they heard and saw, they shared with those who did not hear the good news and did not have a chance to see Jesus. They did essentially the same thing as the angel. They also became angels. The word angel means "being sent". The angels were the heavenly messengers of God, and the shepherds were the earthly messengers. Our Heavenly Father wants to make us all messengers, to share and confirm what we heard, and what we saw, and that everything that we saw is true.

The shepherds did not preach. They just shared their experiences. They shared the facts. The word of God is about facts.

It is so awesome what we read in the last verse: *"The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told."* Luke 2:20 This sentence reveals so much about who the messengers, the shepherds, became. They went back from where they came. They went back into the cold, dark night, to their

responsibilities but with a completely different heart. They glorified God. They were living illustrations of how the good news can change peoples' lives.

The Christmas holidays will pass quickly. I am wondering if the Christmas wonder will stay with you and you will be transformed, or if everything will stay the same in your life as it was before. Do you want to change? Would you like to be a messenger, a channel of God's peace?

Once, after a church service, a little girl asked her mother: "Mommy, after we prayed that we love God, do you think that God believes in us?" Let's think about this for a moment: does God believe in us? He created us. He sustains us. He sent His only Son to us to be our Saviour and to die for us on the cross. He has entrusted us with the responsibility to spread the gospel.

The answer is "YES!" God does believe in you and me, and for this God wants to make you His messenger. He believed that we all are worth being redeemed. Though often we walk away from Him, He sent His son to us to find us and to reconnect us with Him. Though we have so many weaknesses, God considered us valuable enough to save you and me. By His grace, we are surrounded by His unmerited favour and kindness. He has reached out to us in Christ Jesus, so that we might become all that He created us to be! You are a child of God. Rejoice! Amen