

Christmas Day Sermon

Sermon Text: Luke 2:1-20

Sermon Theme: Listen to the Shepherd Tell His Story
Come and See the Savior. Your Savior, My Savior.

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to his own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

*¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."*

¹⁵ 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."

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Did you hear the news? The Messiah is born? Did you hear the news? The Messiah is born just like they said! The prophecies have been fulfilled!! God has sent his Messiah to earth to save us.

Hello my friends! So many of you in one place.... This is great, I can tell my news to all of you at one time. The Messiah has been born.

I can see that maybe you don't believe me. I don't look like someone who would have this kind of news to share with you. I don't look like the priest or a Pharisee. And you're right, I'm just a lowly shepherd. But the news I am telling you is the truth and I want to tell you why.

I am just a shepherd. Most of the time my job is not very exciting. I am there to watch the sheep. Sometimes I have to scare some predators away, but most of the time my companions and I watch over the flock as they eat or sleep. Even though not much happens when we are watching, we still have to keep watch to make sure that all is well.

Last night, my companions and I were out in the fields watching the sheep just as we do every night. All of a sudden, up in the sky, there was bright light. It was so bright that it blinded us. We didn't know what it was. We picked up our rods and our staffs to defend ourselves and our sheep but I don't think any of us really even thought we were going to live.

But then a voice like I have never heard spoke to us. "Do not be afraid" It was only then as our eyes adjusted to this bright light that we saw it was an angel speaking to us from the sky above. The angel said, **"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find the baby wrapped in clothes and lying in a manger."**



Most people think that anyone can be a shepherd. That's probably true, but that does not mean that we are any different from any of you. We went to the synagogue schools just as you did. We know and believe the promises of the Messiah that are taught by the prophets. We know that God will send his Son to be Immanuel. We know that the Messiah will be from David's line, we know all that Isaiah has prophesied about a virgin and how this child would be called the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. We celebrate the Passover just as you do. We had our fathers tells us that one day God would send his son to be the Lamb, the Messiah who would deliver from our sins. We know the promise made to Adam and Eve that this Son of Man would come and destroy the devil's work.

Just as you were, we were waiting for these prophesies to be revealed. We were waiting for God to send his Messiah. And now the angel was telling us it happened: a Savior has been born. This is my Savior, born for me. This is your Savior, born for you.

In the next minute, the voice of the angel was joined by many, many more voices. It was a choir of angels singing, **"Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."** My eyes are filling with tears now because it was the most beautiful sound that I have ever heard. I don't think I will ever hear anything like that again.

And then they were gone. But we knew what we had to do. We had to go find this Messiah, not to see IF it really happened like the angels and the prophets said. But to praise the Messiah because we knew it had already happened just as we were told.

Now, Bethlehem is not a very big town. But the angel had given us that one clue about where to look. The angel had said the baby would be lying in a manger. As we hurried off to Bethlehem, a plan began to form. We would not look for the baby in the hotels or in the inns because those would not have mangers. Mangers are in the places where animals are kept. We decided that when we got near Bethlehem we would begin to search in all of the sheds and lean-tos and barns we could find. Anyplace that would have a manger that would feed animals.

And we found him and his parents. His parents seemed so ordinary. A young woman named Mary, an older gentleman named Joseph and the baby named Jesus wrapped in pieces of cloth and lying in that manger just as the angels said.

As we praised the newborn Messiah we also talked with Mary and Joseph. They told more of their own amazing story. They told us that an angel had visited Mary and had told her that she would be giving birth to the Messiah in a miraculous way. Just as the prophet Isaiah had said, this young woman, a virgin, would be with child. But when Mary told everyone what the angel said and when she was found to be pregnant, no one believed her story, not even Joseph.

Joseph told us he had decided to divorce her quietly and send her away to have the child, but then, an angel had visited him and told him that what Mary was saying was true. She would be giving birth to the Messiah. Joseph told us that after this had happened he followed God's direction, and, although it looked bad in front of all of his family, he still took Mary as his wife and cared for her and the baby that was to be born.

We asked them why they were in a barn in Bethlehem of all places. It was at least a 4 day journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, why had they come when Mary was so pregnant?

We knew about the great census. We had to be counted too. But they told us that they were both from the line of David. They both needed to come to Bethlehem because Bethlehem was considered the home town of David.

We asked them why they were in an animal shed. They explained that this wasn't planned. Being pregnant they could not travel as fast as some of their family and friends. They made the journey, but when they finally reached Bethlehem many had reached it before them. The houses and inns were filled. The only place to stay was with the animals. At least it was a roof over their head.

As we talked, it became clear how many of those prophecies were being fulfilled in this small little shed. Here in Bethlehem was the Messiah, here was the virgin mother with the baby, here was the descendant of David, the shoot from the stump of Jesse who would sit on God's throne forever, here was Immanuel. Our heads were swimming with the way that God had chosen to reveal his Messiah to the world. Mary seemed amazed too. She listened attentively as we told her about the angels and their message to us. She said she would never forget what we had said and how we had come to visit them and praise the Messiah.

We had stayed longer than we had anticipated. Mary was tired and Joseph along with her. They thanked us for coming as we said that we had better get back out into the fields.

But as we went, our hearts were on fire with the news that we had just heard and seen. We just have to tell the news that the Savior has been born. Everyone needs to hear that the Messiah has come. That is why I am sharing this news with you this morning. When the angel said, "A Savior has been born to you." He was not just talking to me. This is not just my Savior. Jesus was born to be your Savior, and your Savior, and your Savior. I want you to know what I know, I want your heart to be as joyful as mine.

Is your heart burning with the good news I have just told you? Are you as excited as I am about this great gift God has given to you?

Does this news that God has sent a Savior for you and for each one of the people you know, burn in your heart like a wildfire? If it does make your heart leap with joy, like it does for me, what are you going to do about it? Are you going to take out your devices and share this news that a Savior has been born for you and for each of your media friends? Are you going to go to your gatherings and share the news of Jesus birth with your family, friends and neighbors? Or are there other things dancing in your heads even now as I am telling you my story. Will the rest of your morning and afternoon be taken up with food, family, fun and gifts without another thought to what I have just shared with you?

I am sure that I will be talking about this until I die. I just can't stop. This is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to me. But is also the most amazing thing that happened for you too. God loved you enough to send his Son into the world to save you from your sins. The Savior that I met last night is my Savior, but he is also your Savior.

I hope and pray that this is important to you, like it is to me. And I hope and pray that this news of a Savior will be with you for your whole life, like it will be for me. I hope and pray that you will praise and thank God often for this good news, as I will. And I hope and pray that you will share this message with many more people so that they can believe in the Savior and be saved.

I have to go, I have been away from the sheep for too long. Shalom my friends. May the peace of the Messiah be with you and fill your hearts with the good news of forgiveness and eternal life today and every day.