

COMMUNITY GROUPS

STUDY GUIDE

The Shepherds' Transformation: Journey to Joy

Luke 2:8-20

Summary

Are you ready for some good news!? If you want more joy you may not need better circumstances. What you may need is more good news! Such was the journey of the shepherds to find *great* joy. It was a journey of being honored, experiencing God personally and seeing His good word come to pass.

First, you like the shepherds have received the ultimate honor. The value of your life is measured to the ultimate extent by the gift of Jesus Christ. He came to die in your place. *Second*, you are invited into a life in the Spirit, to not just know about God but to experience Him. *Third*, you can live your life by the promises of His Word, for He is true and faithful. He makes a good news announcement and He fulfills it. These are our causes, like the shepherds, for *great* joy. And that's the gospel!

Getting to Know Each Other

Remember the story of the Wal-Mart layaway fairy? They paid off a bunch of layaway debt for total strangers to as a way to demonstrate that *Jesus paid it all*!

When is the last time someone was generous to you with no strings attached?
What was the impact on your joy?

Read Luke 2:8-20

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
*¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Deeper Into the Bible

1. Read back through the passage from Luke 2.
 - a. Get a sense of the setting and the details of what happened.
 - b. Now put yourself in the shepherd's shoes. What are you experiencing? What do you feel?
 - c. Hear the angels call your name and say to *you* personally, "Behold, _____ I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior who is Christ the Lord." What's the impact?
2. Our sermon follows 3 movements in the shepherds' journey to joy: *honor*, *experience* and *trust*. As you survey the text, which of these aspects stands out to you the most? Why? What's the relevance for your life?

Application

1. When in your life story have you come into a deeper understanding of the gospel? How did God work in your life? What role did other people play? What would it look like now to pursue joy by seeking a deeper revelation of the good news about Jesus?
2. At the most fundamental level the good news of grace is this: God shows us kindness instead of wrath because of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for us. This is our story when we have a saving relationship with Jesus.
 - a. What aspects of the gospel create the most wonder and awe for you? Where's the *wow factor* for you with the good news of Jesus?
 - b. How can you go deeper into the joy it brings?
3. Like the Wal-Mart layaway fairy, how can you seek joy this advent season by helping others find joy in Jesus? What's a simple step you can take?