

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
SB 12.20.2020

THE GOOD NEWS OF A SAVIOR – LUKE 2:8-20



Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Usually a news announcement that is highly important will get prime attention. Sometimes if the news is important and has a big enough impact the networks will interrupt their regularly scheduled programming to share it. We see this time and time again in our society from the State of the Union address to grand jury announcements. With the backdrop of prime news getting prime attention the announcement of Jesus to a group of shepherds doesn't make much since. Even in ancient times prime news would have been shared in the town square not out on a country hillside. This world changing news wasn't shared with the prominent rulers of the day, but instead to a lowly group of shepherds. During ancient times shepherds were considered unclean sinners and were the outcast of society. Even the announcement of Jesus' birth laid the foundation for His ministry. Mark 2:17 reads: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." The message was given to those who would receive it and share the good news with others. A message once trusted only to angels to share now rests on everyone who has accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Let's get into our study...

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from Pastor Ray's message this last weekend?
2. What experiences, images, and ideas come to mind when you think of the word "worship"?
3. What is the difference between personal and corporate worship? Why are both of these important in expressing our need for God and desire to be with Him?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 2:8-12

1. Why do you think God chose to announce the birth of His Son to shepherds, some of the lowliest members of society?

In the countryside near Bethlehem, shepherds worked. Their primary responsibility was to guard the sheep, which were used for temple sacrifices among other things. How appropriate that the first people to hear about Jesus' birth were those who guarded the sacrifices He would later replace, when His crucifixion and resurrection permanently atoned for sins. Socially, shepherds weren't Bethlehem's most popular men. Shepherding was a dirty job, usually performed by the lower class. Because of their work, they were considered unclean and weren't allowed to worship in the temple. By letting the shepherds know about the good news of Jesus' birth and sending them to meet Him, God made it clear that no one was outside His love.

2. How has God spoken to you in the ordinary flow of life, as He did to the shepherds?
3. What three titles are given to Jesus in verse 11?

Prepare! in 2020

4. How would you describe to someone that Jesus is fully divine and fully human?
5. Of the truths about Jesus in these verses, which moves you to worship, and why?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 2:13-15

1. What do you think went through the shepherds' minds as the night sky suddenly lit up with the most brilliant display of angels? What do you think they saw? Heard? Felt?
2. What is the gospel message in verses 11-14?
3. What do we learn about God's love for us through the shepherds' encounter with the angels?

Between the angel's announcement and the angelic song, we get an incredible picture of the gospel. The Messiah is here, He brings with Him our salvation and peace, and that deserves our praise and worship.

4. Have someone read Matthew 2:3-5. How did the shepherds' reaction to the news of the Messiah's arrival compare to the religious leaders' reaction? What is significant about this contrast?

The shepherds had A sense of expectancy and urgency Verse 15 reports their first words as "Let's go straight to Bethlehem." Even though they had earthly responsibilities (keeping the flock of sheep), these men knew they were experiencing something divine. Seeing angels, hearing them speak of God's peace, and knowing that the Savior had arrived was something worth abandoning their daily routine over. We need to worship God with the same level of abandonment and expectancy.

5. What keeps us from embracing the message of Jesus with the same abandonment as the shepherds?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 2:16-20.

1. How can we be more intentional about worshiping God for the birth of Jesus with our family, Christian friends, and non-Christian friends?
2. How would you explain the significance of Christmas to someone who doesn't already understand it? Who in your life may need to hear this explanation?

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

DON'T BE AFRAID! We are all under such incredible pressure. We may feel no one understands, much less cares. Cast your cares on Him for He cares for you! The Angels Declared Good News telling the Shepherd's "don't be afraid" and declaring "a savior has arrived!" It was because of Christ's incarnation and His perfect identification with humanity that He could save us all. He became perfect by suffering temptation as a real man and putting the tempter to flight. As a real man He took our sins upon Himself and dying in our place an atoning death for us. Whatever our situation, He can Deliver us! The Angel said the Good News was "for all people." Whatever our situation, He can Deliver us. Whoever you are, He can Deliver you, help you and save you.

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

1. Jesus went from a throne in heaven to a manger in a stable. How does this single act demonstrate how much God loves each and every one of us?
2. What are some ways we can we ready ourselves daily and weekly to meet with God in worship?
3. Does your life demonstrate that this is good news for "all people"?

Prepare! in 2020

PRAYER - give your group members the opportunity to voice prayers of worship and praise to God for what Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection means to them. Encourage them to use this as a time to worship God together through prayer.

Note: Pastor Ray reminded us that we must prepare for Jan 2021! Start adding to your food pantry by getting a little extra every time you go out. Remember the shortages we had the last time people bought out the stores. We can also be prepared to help our neighbors. Consider following our "CONOPS" 3 Hr, 3 day and 3 week plan as seen here- <https://www.maranathachapel.org/growthgroups>

"Because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25 Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them." (Heb. 7:24-25)