

Title: The "Greatness" of Christmas

Passage: Luke 2:8-21

Key Truths:

- The greatest threat we have in this world is God's judgment over us.
- The Good News of Jesus is for all: for those who think they have no need of salvation (prideful), and for those who think they are beyond rescue (lowly)
- Only real, eternal joy can be found in Jesus Christ.
- If Jesus has taken care of our greatest need (punishment of our sin), how will Jesus not also carry you through difficult circumstances? Trust in Him.

Application:

- Remind yourself of the Gospel daily and regularly.
- Trust in His sovereignty and goodness.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
 - If you had been the shepherds on the night Christ was born, what would you have done after the angels left?
 - What should be our response when we discover what God wants us to do?
 - How can you glorify and praise God with others this week?
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Passage:

Luke 2:8-21

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

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." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

EXPOSITION

Context of Passage:

Luke 1

- The announcement and birth of John the Baptist
 - Miracle as born to elderly parents
- Mary visited by an angel announcing she has been chosen to bear Jesus.

Luke 2

- Roman government calls a census so people have to go back to their hometown to register.

Luke 2:7

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- "no place for them in the inn"
 - Inn = same word for "upper room" (reference to Last Supper).
- Result is that Joseph and Mary had to stay in the first floor with other animals.

Luke 2:8

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

- Contrary to common expectations
 - Shepherd were of poor and lowly stature.
- Meaning = God sent His Son for the lowliest of people.

- Also shows the trustworthiness of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - The greatest announcement

Shepherds - Why chosen?

- Points to Moses and David in the Old Testament who were shepherds.
- God is also pictured as a Shepherd.
- Fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies

Jeremiah 33:13-16

In the cities of the hill country, in the cities of the Shephelah, and in the cities of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places about Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD.

The LORD'S Eternal Covenant with David

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: The LORD is our righteousness."

- shepherds were caring for lambs that would be used for the Passover sacrifice
 - Picture of Jesus being the ultimate Lamb of God.

John 1:29

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"

- shepherds were outcasts and of low stature.
 - Were from poor backgrounds.
 - Were of lowest class (just above lepers)
- Picture of God's mercy coming for the lowest of people.

Great Fear

Luke 2:9

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.

- Why "filled with great fear"

- Saw “the glory of the Lord”
 - A glimpse of the majesty of God.

Isaiah 6:1-5

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!”

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!”

- When we see who God truly is, we are in absolute awe and reverence.
 - Contrast common culture where tend to trivialize worship and the Word.
- Question: Do you have a holy fear of God?
 - God will judge and punish everyone who sins.

Great news

Luke 2:10

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.

- When we recognize who God is, we understand not only His greatness but also the great news.
 - The church is a hospital for sinners (not a museum of saints)

for all the people.

- The Good News of Jesus is for all
 - For those who think they have no need of salvation (prideful), and
 - For those who think they are beyond rescue (lowly)
- Isaiah (several prophecies of the Messiah who would provide redemption)

Luke 2:11

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

For unto you

- a child is normally born unto that child's parents.
 - But Jesus was born to us for redemption.

in the city of David

- descendant from the greatest human king of Israel.
- Fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy to David who would have one who would reign forever.

a Savior

- Savior of what? From our sins.

Matthew 1:21

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

- The greatest threat we have in this world is God's judgment over us.

Matthew 10:28

And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

How does Jesus save us?

- Jesus lived the perfect life on our behalf.
 - He then died on the cross as full penalty of our sin.
 - He then resurrected to prove He says who He said He is (God).

who is Christ

- Christ = the Messiah
 - Messiah = the Anointed One
 - Who will bring restoration and redemption.

the Lord.

- points to Jesus' deity.
 - Jesus was 100% human and 100% divine
- How proven?

- Jesus' resurrection from the dead.
- Fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies.
- All the disciples never recanted before their death (many died because of their faith)

Response to the Good News

Luke 2:15-20

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." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

- Question: Do you have great joy?
 - Only real, eternal joy can be found in Jesus Christ.

Application Point:

If a Christian: Remind yourself of the Gospel daily and regularly.

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

- If Jesus has taken care of our greatest need (punishment of our sin), how will Jesus not also carry you through difficult circumstances?
 - Trust in Him.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

If not a Christian: Who do you think Jesus is?

- Was Jesus merely a good teacher?
 - But He said He was God.
 - Was He a liar or lunatic?
 - He resurrected from the dead.

- Make Him your Lord and Savior.