

The shepherds' Good News: a Savior is born! (Luke 2:8–20)

The heart of the account of the shepherds at the birth of Jesus is the message of good news which the shepherds received from the angel, and then proclaimed: “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11). This was good news of great joy, joy for them and joy for you.

I. Good News for the shepherds

1. *Good news for the shepherds, because they belonged to a despised class.*

The joyous good news came first to the shepherds, though they belonged to a despised social class. This has been God’s pattern of practice, when lowliness is combined with humility, as expressed in Mary’s prayer (Luke 1:46–55), by Isaiah (57:15), and by Paul (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:26–29.) You don’t need to be rich, smart, or strong to appreciate this as good news for you.

2. *Good news for the shepherds, because they provided continual animal sacrifice*

The shepherds’ nearness to Jerusalem meant that they probably provided sacrificial lambs. But continually offering lambs was an indicator of their insufficiency (Hebrews 10:1–4). But now a Savior had come, whose birth we celebrate, who would give Himself as the once-for-all-time sacrifice for sin.

3. *Good news for the shepherds, because it drew them into heavenly worship*

With the announcement of good news, they were surrounded by the glory of the Lord, given a sign to confirm what was said, and made witness to “a multitude of the heavenly host praising God.” It was as if the shepherds were being invited to join in joyously to praise and glory God, which they would eventually do. You have the same reason to join in praise because a Savior was born, Christ the Lord.

II. Good News from the shepherds

The shepherds went and found the child, and proclaimed what they had heard from the angel: “A Savior is born, Christ the Lord.”

1. *They were convinced messengers*

Willing to leave the sheep for which they were responsible, the shepherds showed a conviction that the message was true. They heard and saw much and they believed. “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believe.” (John 20:29) Believing in a risen Savior gives great reason for joy.

2. *The shepherds also were bold messengers.*

Even though they were “just” shepherds, they announced this good news to Joseph and Mary and others. Perhaps their boldness arose from their joyous conviction: truly a Savior is born, which is good news for all people. Focus on the real reason for joy in this season and be a joyous light to those around you.

3. *The shepherds were also pious messengers.*

We see the shepherds as God-fearing messengers in their response, “glorifying and praising God.” They declared to God and others, God’s goodness and greatness. Both are embodied in the event of that day, “unto you is born ... a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

The shepherd’s message is your message and Good News for all people. Find joy in it and share it, remembering as well that it was not by Christ’s birth, but by His death and resurrection that He provided salvation. We celebrate at Christmas His entrance into humanity so that He could offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice for sin. For this reason He came into the world, and for this reason we can have joy.