

# Good News of Great Joy

Luke 2:8-15

December 12, 2004

## Intro

It is very fitting that we celebrate Christmas during the darkest time of the year. When Jesus came to the earth, then truly “light shone in the darkness.”

I would like us to consider a specific moment in the Christmas story; a moment when darkness was shattered. I’m referring to the moment when the angels appeared to the shepherds.

When the angel of the Lord appears, light shone all around him; the radiance of the God’s glory. **At the moment of his appearing, they were very afraid. And that scene plays out a theme of great importance.**

**In these verses we learn about the importance of Christ’s appearing as the answer to our darkest hour.**

## **I. Do Not Be Afraid**

### A. Without Jesus, there’s good reason to be afraid

- There were many reasons to be afraid in that day;
  - Herod was on the throne; a cruel man.
  - The Roman army was occupying their land.
  - Many wars had taken a toll on the people.

- There are many reasons to be afraid in our day as well;
  - 9/11 has shown us that we are vulnerable as a nation.
  - The economy is fragile.
  - There are wars and rumors of wars.
  - People are killing innocent people in the name of God.
- **Without Jesus, there is good reason to be afraid...**

**Ephesians 2:12, “remember that at that time you were separate from Christ ... without hope and without God in the world.”**

### B. Good news is the answer to fear

- As a response to the fears of the shepherds, the angel responded, **“Do not be afraid, I bring you good news...”**
- “Fear not,” is used 365 times in the bible.
  - enough for every day of the year.
- And repeatedly, the answer to fear is the presence of the Lord.

**Isaiah 41:10, “Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”**

**Illus – We used to sing a praise song and the verse of it was very powerful...**

*“I have redeemed you I have called you by name,  
child you are mine.*

*When you walk through the waters, I will be there,  
and through the flames; you’ll not – no way – be  
drowned, you’ll not – no way – be burned for I  
am with you.”*

*Fear not, for I am with you, fear not.”*

**Illus – When the angel spoke, he said, “Do not be afraid for behold, I bring you good news.” That’s the answer to fear – a more excellent word.**

C. This is good news of great joy

- The angel was not just bringing good news, but good news of great joy.

**Illus – When fear has been relieved, joy is the proper response.**

**There was a news story a number of years ago of a hostage crisis played out at the Entebbe airport in Uganda. The very airport I flew out of last January, by a pilot that used to work with Joyce and Bob with the Africa Inland Mission.**

**You could see through television reports, the fear on the faces of the hostages, as you can imagine. But then, through a daring Israeli raid, they were free.**

**Their great fear had changed to abounding joy.**

- Some people have lost the right perspective on life and need to know again that good news of great joy has come to our dark world!

## II. A Savior Has Been Born For You

A. He will save His people

- This was the word given to Joseph in a dream.
- He will save them *from their sins*.
- Have you ever realized that that is what we need to be saved from; our sins?

**Illus – God must save us from our sins because without Christ, we will drown in them.**

**Acts 13:38-39, “Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses.”**

**Acts 13:40-41, “Therefore take heed, so that the thing spoken of in the Prophets may not come upon you: Behold, you scoffers, and marvel, and perish: For I am doing a work in your days, a work which you will never believe, though someone should describe it to you.”**

B. He was born on earth, but also in our hearts

- A vital part of this good news must not be lost in us.
- He is given to the world, but He must be received one person at a time.

### **Illus – The third verse of “O Little Town of Bethlehem”**

*How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is given! So God imparts to human hearts, the blessing of His heaven.*

*No ear may hear His coming, But in this world of sin, Where meek souls will receive Him still, The dear Christ enters in.*

**John 1:12-13, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.”**

### **III. He is Christ the Lord**

#### **A. God’s chosen one**

- Why would anyone want another?
- There can be no better news than what He brought to man.
- There can be no better provision for our sin.
  - Taking our sin upon Himself.
  - Giving us His righteousness.

#### **Hebrews 1:1-4 How excellent is His name...**

- Jesus is not only God’s Word to man, He is God’s complete and final Word to man.

#### **B. And He is Lord**

- The word “lord” is used many times in scripture to indicate a person of authority.
- A worker would use the word to refer to his supervisor.
- But when it is used of Jesus, it must be clearly understood.
- The shepherds said that He is both Savior and Lord.
- We are to recognize Jesus as Lord of our lives.

**Luke 6:46-49, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say? Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.”**

**Illus – Our children must learn who is in authority at home, so they will know who is in authority on earth.**

### **Conclusion**

**The hopes and fears of all the years; are met in Thee tonight. Jesus is the very place where our fears come face to face with hope. But we must receive Him as He was given; Savior and Lord.**