

## The Message of Christmas

Luke 2:8-20, Sunday AM, December 25, 2022

**Prelude – Choir—I Heard the Bells** **Scripture: Luke 2:8-20** In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> “This *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.” <sup>15</sup> When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds *began* saying to one another, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup> So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. <sup>18</sup> And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

It happened out there—out where it was quiet—out far from where anything important happened. **And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.** Do you feel bad for their scare? Most probably say, NO, because of what they will hear. **But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup> for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.** Then heaven opened and a multitude of the heavenly host praised God! Just watch, it is beautiful, awesome, life-changing! **But what if they weren’t ready for such a display of heaven’s glory?** What if they were sensitive to noises, bright light? What if this wasn’t their appropriate way to display love and value? When heaven opened that night, there was NO exclusion clause for those with heart problems, for those depressed, bitter, feeling like a loser, too stressed right now. NO, heaven says, “THIS is praiseworthy, and THIS is how, where, and when heaven will display this good news! Church, sing with the joy the angel’s proclaimed!

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): Sing We the Song of Emmanuel**

The shepherds responded to this news with immediate action. **Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us. So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.** And afterwards, **they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.** When you hear this message, how do you respond? Does it make a difference? Does it change anything or call you to share it with others? Ponder again the implications of this birth.

**\*Hymn #137: What Child Is This?**

**\*Pastoral Prayer: Pastor Jahn Choir: A Merry Carol of the Bells**

**Scripture: Romans 1:1–17** Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup> through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about *the* obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for His name’s sake, <sup>6</sup> among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; <sup>7</sup> to all who are beloved of God in Rome, called *as* saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>8</sup> First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world. <sup>9</sup> For God, whom I serve in my spirit in the *preaching of the* gospel of His Son, is my witness *as to* how unceasingly I make mention of you, <sup>10</sup> always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you. <sup>11</sup> For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; <sup>12</sup> that is, that I may be encouraged together with you *while* among you, each of us by the other’s faith, both yours and mine. <sup>13</sup> I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that often I have planned to come to you (and have been prevented so far) so that I may obtain some fruit among you also, even as among the rest of the Gentiles. <sup>14</sup> I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish. <sup>15</sup> So, for my part, I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. <sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”

**Offering: \*Doxology:**

When Pastor Jahn gets up in a few moments to preach the message of Christmas, how will you respond? Will you join those who wondered at what they had been told by the shepherds? Will you treasure these things with Mary, and ponder them in your heart? You can’t ponder this birth without pondering other questions. Why did Jesus come to earth? What did it mean for Him to do the will of the Father for 33 years? If He truly was deity, then why did He experience conflict and death? What did Jesus think about all the conflict and dishonorable treatment? If Jesus rose from the dead, then why did He leave again? What about His words to return? How do these affect me NOW? Ponder as you sing the familiar carol.

**\*Hymn #128: It Came upon the Midnight Clear**

You can’t ponder the first advent in a godly way without a growing anticipation for the second advent because to believe the words and actions of Jesus lead to a relationship with a living Christ who promised to return for His own. It is THIS reality that explodes from the heart of Paul as he writes the letter to the Romans. **Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh, <sup>4</sup> who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord.** This living Christ mercifully gives time for others to see and repent of their rejection of their Redeemer. Because of this, Paul is NOT ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ even as he faces innumerable hardships for his faithful proclamation of this gospel and care for those regenerated to new life in Christ. Ponder this born again fellowship with the living Christ that lifts our gaze toward doing His will and waiting for His return as you sing and then prepare to receive the Word as pastor preaches.

**\*Hymn (Powerpoint): In the First Light**

**Message: The Message of Christmas Luke 2:8-20 \*Hymn #145: O Come All Ye Faithful**

**Prayer**