

## Luke 2:8-14

***In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then the angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior; who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth 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 heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”***

*“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing. ‘Glory to the newborn King. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.’ Joyful all you nations rise; join the triumph of the skies with angelic hosts proclaim, ‘Christ is born in Bethlehem.’”*

Imagine the shepherds staring in amazement while also trembling and trying to grasp the meaning of this heavenly announcement! Terrified by the angel of the Lord before them, these shepherds were literal outsiders who lived outdoors and away from villages, towns, and cities unless they needed something. They were considered irresponsible and often unclean, yet they were willing to risk their own lives to ensure the safety of their flocks.

The sight of the angel terrified shepherds who often dealt alone with their charge’s predators. Yes, they were terrified, even while the good news of a joyous event reassured them. The birth of Israel’s “Savior,” “Christ,” and “Lord” offered here is unique within the New Testament. The Angel encouraged them to go out and find this wonderful Christ child. Slowly these shepherds had moved from fear, to reassurance, to curiosity. These shepherds even decided to go and see for themselves what had been revealed to them.

Can you imagine this group of outsiders searching through Bethlehem, Shepherds wanting to look only in stables to find not just a child “wrapped in bands of cloth,” but specifically one “lying in a manger”? Can you imagine what these instant evangelists said as they were searching this ... “Little town”? Searching for a baby, lying on a bed of hay. How often do we consider this group of outsiders moving through fear, to reassurance, past curiosity, and into becoming evangelists? Is this all a happenstance or is there more to this movement? Do only Christian converts move through steps such as these?

Do we fear sharing the good news with others, gaining reassurance and curiosity, before becoming evangelists ourselves? Christ came so that all of us, regardless of station or regardless

how good we are, can walk this Shepherd's path. Join us for the rest of the story tonight, whether in-person or on-line. But never forget ... Christ is with us!

*"Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, late in time behold him come, offspring of a virgin's womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail incarnate deity! Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!"*