

Why Shepherds? Why Us? Why Share?
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Luke 2:8–20 (NKJV)

8 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10 Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

14 “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

15 So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. 17 Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. 18 And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19 But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

In the abbreviated time we have, and to pick up where Karl left off last week, I want us to consider three questions

- Why shepherds?
- Why us?
- Why share?

Why shepherds?

- What do we know about shepherds in the time of Jesus' birth?
- To set the tone I turn to another well known Christmas story... "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer." Now, stay with me! In the 1964 TV classic, Rudolph and Hermey the Elf (who wanted to be a dentist) sing about their lot in life. Listen to the words of their song:

*We're a couple of misfits
We're a couple of misfits
What's the matter with misfits
That's where we fit in!*

*Different from the rest
Who decides the test
Of what is really best?*

*We're a couple of misfits
We're a couple of misfits
What's the matter with misfits
That's where we fit in!*
(Written by Johnny Marks)

- The shepherds could have sung, "*We're a HILLSIDE of misfits... that's where we fit in!*"
- Shepherds were placed on the lowest rung of society in that day.
- Because of their job they were constantly ceremonially unclean.
- Because they were nomads, they couldn't get to the temple regularly to be cleansed.
- The only people who hung out with shepherds were other shepherds.
- Ironically, the Jewish Talmud instructed that shepherds could not be witnesses in court, yet God decided they would be the first witnesses of the Gospel!

Why do you think God chose to announce the most anticipated event in the Jewish world to the most common people in Jewish society?

Chuck Swindoll writes:

“God chose to announce His gift to common men—nameless shepherds—because Jesus came to address humankind’s common condition: our desperate need for a Savior.”

Why shepherds? Why you and me?

- Ever feel like a “misfit” who’s not worthy to share about Jesus?
- Paul had a message for the Corinthians that answers the question: Why us?

1 Corinthians 1:26–30 (ESV)

26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption,

The final question is: Why share?

- Look back at our text, Luke 2. In verses 15 and 16 the shepherds did what we would probably do in this situation, they went to check it out!
- In verses 17 and 18 they TOLD what had happened to them and how it affected them.
- Then in verse 20 they went back to their common jobs *“glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen...”*
- Seeing; Responding; and Telling...what a great example for us!
- Notice NONE those verses tell us they were instructed to share what they had experienced. Their sharing was a natural response to such an incredible experience with God!

- The shepherds may have been “misfits,” but they were not “nit wits.” They knew their encounter with the God of the universe had to be SHARED with others.
- Why did THEY share? Why should WE share? Isaiah prophesied all this 700 years before Jesus was born:

Isaiah 9:2–7 (HCSB)

2 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
a light has dawned
on those living in the land of darkness.

- The shepherds were people walking in darkness both literally and figuratively.

6 For a child will be born for us,
a son will be given to us,
and the government will be on His shoulders.
He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father,
Prince of Peace.

- Do you need a “wonderful, wise, Counselor” this week? Someone who only has your best interests at heart? What about your friends and family, do they need that?
- What about a Mighty God?

17th century philosopher Blaise Pascal said:

“There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.”

- Eternal Father speaks to eternal protection and provision. (Grace Point TV illustration)
- As earthly parents, even with the best of intentions, we cannot ultimately protect our children.

- That's why they need an ETERNAL FATHER. Building our families on the message of the Gospel has ripples for generations to come.
- Prince of Peace. Peace in our world; peace on our streets; peace in our homes; peace in our hearts...everyone hungers and thirsts for peace. Some pursue it with entertainment, with sex, with substances, and yet it eludes their grasp. Ultimate peace comes only from the ultimate peace-giver...the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ.

- Like the shepherds we are all "misfits" walking in darkness. But, we've seen a GREAT LIGHT!
- A light that can mean eternal life for those we know and love for generations to come.
- Why share? Why would we NOT share such great news!