

December 12, 2021 ADVENT WEEK 3

The Shepherd Candle of Joy

Cast of Christmas Advent series.

Week One: The Prophets Candle of Hope. Where we talked about the concepts of Anticipation, Preparation & Expectation.

Week Two: The Angel Candle of Peace. Where we talked about the Promise of Peace, The Proclamation of Peace, The Procurement of Peace, and the Practice of Peace.

Week Three: Today is The Shepherd Candle of Joy

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Joy Lessons From the Shepherds Luke 2:7-2:20

Luke 2:7-9... “*And she (Mary) brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. (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.*”

1. They learned that everyone is important to God

“The invitation of God comes to the most despised of people, outcasts from all respectable society. Their honesty and integrity was so questionable that they were not even allowed to testify in a court of law in those days. Shepherds were so far down on the list of social outcast that the only people lower were lepers. I believe that God chose the shepherds because he wanted to show that His love is available to all. He is not a respecter of persons, he does not show more respect to kings than he does to hourly wage earners. You may think; “If God is even aware that I exist, He probably doesn’t have a

very favorable opinion of me!” Deep down a lot people may feel like that. But no matter how insignificant you may think you are God knows you and you are important to Him.” John Hamby

The Apostle Paul explains this in his **first letter to the Corinthians (1:26-28)** “*For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. (27) But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; (28) and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are,*”

2. They Learned That God Has Wonderful News For All Who Will Believe

(vv. 10-14)

“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.”

“Note with me that the message that the angel brought from God spoke to their most immediate need when the angel said, “fear not.” The Bible says that they were “greatly afraid.” When the angelic messenger suddenly appeared the shepherds reacted in a normal human would they were terribly afraid. You too may have a heart filled with fear this Christmas. Fear about, your health, your family, your job security, the economy, or the world conditions. But we need not fear, we have “good tiding of great joy” because the savior was born. Because scripture has been fulfilled. Because Christ is LORD over all.

Notice too that this news “will be to all people.” This news is not just for a privileged few. Scripture says, “Whosoever will let him come.” Jesus came for pay for the sins of all sinners. He is available to all. It is amazing to consider that heavenly host stretched from horizon to horizon to witness the most amazing event in the history of the universe”. John Hamby

“Then the heavenly host began to sing praises. Scripture says in Job 38:7 that at creation the angels “sang together and all the angels shouted for joy,” now they join voices again to welcome the birth of the savior of mankind. The sign to them is that they will find the Christ child lying in a manger. No other child was born in a cattle stable that night, no other child’s first resting place was a crude feeding trough designed to feed cattle”. John Hamby

3. They Learned That How You Respond To The Invitation Of God Makes All the Difference (vv. 15-16)

“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.”

“They could have doubted what they had been told. They could have said, “It can be like we were told. In fact why should we have been told at all. We better just forget about it.” They could have ignored it. They could have any number of excuses that would keep them from checking out the story they had just heard.

They could have debated it. They could have sat down and analyzed what they should do. Could they afford to leave the sheep? What if something happened while they were gone? Talking, talking and more talking. Sometimes we actually talk ourselves out of responding in faith. They could have rejected it. They could have said, “This is not for me! This sounds kind of flaky to me.” We often reject what we think demands too much of us.

But the shepherds chose to believe. The belief of the shepherds in the message of the angel is shown in their words, they did not say, “Let us go and see if these things are true but “let us now go ...and see this thing that has come to pass.”. John Hamby

4. They Learned That What You Do With The Good News Is Of Great Importance. (vv. 17-18, 20) **(Respond & Share)**

“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.(20) Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.”

“As the first evangelists they did not emphasize what it was like to see an angel, or to hear the angelic choir. Nor did they dwell on how frightened they were. Their main interest was in reporting, “which was told them concerning this Child.”

Every individual is important. It is impossible to live, even for a few moments on this earth and not influence somebody in one way or another. We are always influencing someone, either for good or for bad.

The last verse of our text says that the shepherds who had seen such wondrous sights had to go back to the ordinary. That is true for us each year, for the celebration of Christmas is a special time. But when the fun and excitement is over we have to return to our jobs and our responsibilities. But the shepherds returned so full of what had happened in their lives they could not keep themselves from sharing the good news with everyone they came into contact with. John Hamby

Application. What the Shepherds learned at the manger.

- 1. They learned that everyone is important to God**
- 2. They learned that God has wonderful news for all who will believe**
- 3. They learned that how you respond to the invitation of God makes all the difference**
- 4. They learned that what you do with the good news is of great importance. (Respond & Share)**

“Being a shepherd was lonely, weary, usually very boring and tedious, interspersed with moments of extreme danger. You know what kept the shepherds going? It was hope. God had promised his people that one day he would send the Messiah, that when the Messiah came everything would be different. It was that hope that burned in their hearts and kept them going. How about us? Sometimes we become weary. There are times when we wonder if it worthwhile to keep on. But the Lord has promised that one day He will come back. He is coming for all of us, shepherds and kings, wisemen and peasants. He is coming for his people. He will dry all the tears and take away all the pain. There will be no more death and no more goodbyes. And then we will say, It was worth it all, it was worth it all”.

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