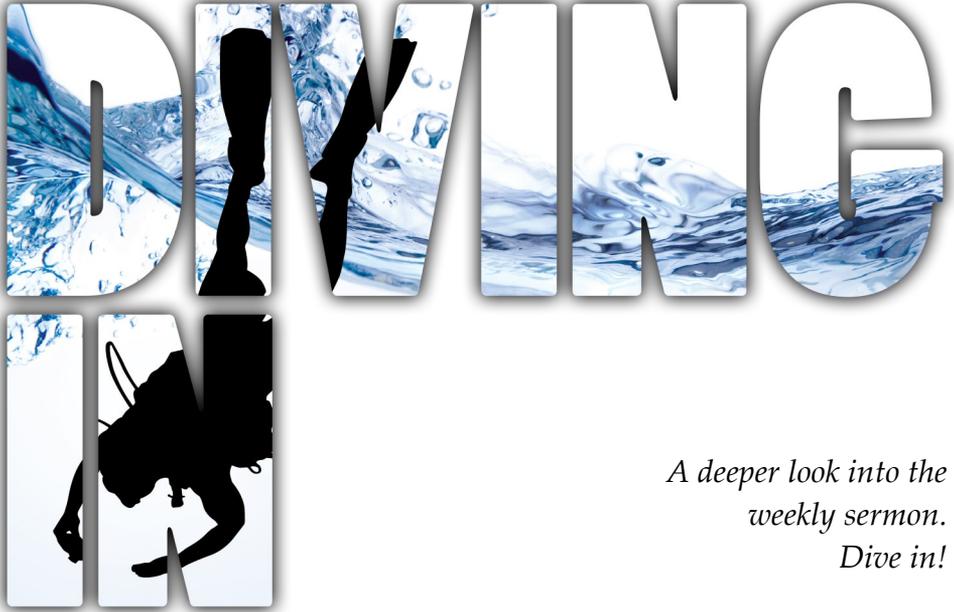


November 28 - December 3, 2022



*A deeper look into the
weekly sermon.
Dive in!*

Passive Observer or Active Distributor?

Luke 2:8-20

We are entrusted with the truth of Christmas! Jesus came to be the Savior. There is good news of great joy. As we consider the account of Jesus' birth we have a choice. Will we be passive observers or active distributors of this good news?

Monday, November 28, 2022

Choice

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

Luke 2:8-9

Please read Luke 2:8-20 today. It is a passage that many people know and have heard read at Christmas. Each year we have the opportunity to enter into the Christmas narrative. It becomes comfortable to do so—and that is good. The story is meant to be told. It is why it has been shared in the form of a narrative. However, we must remember that the narrative is given so that it makes a difference. Sometimes we can get so involved in breaking down the individual parts of the narrative that we miss the impact the story is to have on our lives. We miss the forest for the trees. The shepherds are confronted with the glory of God. It shines all around them. We try to imagine what this looked like, but we cannot! It must have been amazing and unmistakable. They knew what it was, and they were filled with great fear. We will think through their encounter this week and consider their response to the news they were given—and the presence of God. They caught a glimpse of heaven, and just a glimpse was enough to bring great awe. When all is said and done, they will be left with a choice. Will they be passive observers or active distributors of the message entrusted to them? The passage reveals that they were very active in the way they sought out and distributed the message of grace! As we go through their encounter this week, let's consider that we have the same choice in our lives. Sadly, most will passively observe rather than actively distribute the truth. Ask God to give you a glimpse into heaven this Advent season. Advent means appearing. Jesus appeared. Have you beheld his glory? Has it filled you with great fear and awe? What choice will you make about what to do with what you know?

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Savior

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11

Please read and or listen to Luke 2:8-20 again today. We will be reading it every day this week so that the word can pour into our hearts. Try reading it in different translations. The angel declares that there is a Savior who is Christ the Lord. This is the only place in Scripture where these three titles of Jesus are used to declare who he is. As one of the Persons of the Godhead, the Son has always existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus' birth is not the beginning of life for the Son of God. Rather it is the birth of the God-man—Jesus. Fully and genuinely God and fully and genuinely human—two natures in one person. This is not an amalgamation of the two natures; rather, each remained distinct. Human nature always remained human and divine always remained divine. This was necessary for us to have a kinsman redeemer. This is the importance of the virgin birth. With the birth of Jesus, a Savior was born. He is the promised Messiah—the Christ. And he is Lord. This is the good news of great joy. The good news is the gospel. There is a way for people to have peace with God. God has come to mankind to rescue them from sin. Jesus came to make his dwelling among men and, in so doing, brought a glimpse of his dwelling place with him. We catch a glimpse of heaven as we look into the life of Christ. Perhaps you are still trapped in your sinful life and have not grasped the Savior of Christmas. Perhaps you have seen Jesus as the Savior, but the story has become mundane to you. Perhaps your life is filled with inexpressible joy because you know what you have been saved from, for, and to. Jesus is born. This is good news of great joy!

Wednesday, November 30, 2022

Cross

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11

Please read and/or listen to Luke 2:8-20 again today. The Ball Brothers have a song entitled. "It's About The Cross." One of the lines in that song goes like this: "It's about the cross, it's about my sin. It's about how Jesus came to be born once so that we could be born again." The truth that was proclaimed by the angel was that a Savior had been born. The world needed a Savior. It had to be God's Son. There was no other way. *God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son* (John 3:16). We must pause at this point to remember that the beauty of the birth holds within it the understanding that this baby will grow and will bear the weight of our sin. He will die on a cross, and he will rise again from the dead and he will ascend into heaven where he is seated at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. He will defeat sin on the cross and he will defeat death in the resurrection—but only for those who receive him. Yes, Jesus came to be the Savior, but is he your Savior? You may know the story of Christmas, but do you know the Savior of Christmas? Have you repented and turned to him for new life? I pray you have, and I pray that knowing Jesus has changed your life and allowed you to know the joy of the true life that comes only in relationship with him. Spend some time today thanking Jesus and celebrating your Savior. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TYSJj-EHAAK>

Thursday, December 1, 2022

Haste

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

Luke 2:15-16

Please read and/or listen to Luke 2:8-20 again today. We are considering the difference between being an active participant or a passive observer of the truth of the gospel. That is the message contained within Christmas. The world needed a Savior and God sent his son. The first to be told of the birth were the shepherds. While we can speculate about the many significant reasons that God may have chosen shepherds, the truth is that, at the time of the birth of Jesus, in the culture in which they lived, shepherds—especially those who were charged with the night watch—were considered socially undesirable, disreputable, and unclean. They represented the very people that Jesus came to save. He is near to the brokenhearted. The shepherds knew who they were. They knew that people did not think highly of them at all. Jesus would turn the concept of shepherd upside down but, at the time of his birth, the choice of shepherds was unexpected. The shepherds heard the news from the multitude of angels, and they acted on what they had been told. They could have stayed where they were and just let the news be good for them. Instead, they jumped into action. They went with haste to see what the Lord made known to them. They believed and then they went to have their faith become sight. They were not disappointed. Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine the scene. Try to imagine past the images and manger scenes that you have seen over your lifetime. Look deeply into the hearts of those in the manger scenes. Joseph and Mary, holding the baby that changed their lives, surely faced ridicule for the way this baby appeared to come into the world. There is an intimate moment as they look into the face of God made flesh. They know this is God they hold. Imagine what they may be saying to each other at that moment. Perhaps they were silent. Then, shepherds appear. Outcasts come to see the baby. How did they find out? How did they know? Put yourself in the moment and realize that this is the way that God will choose to save the world. Unapproachable God is with us in a most unexpected form—a baby. Perhaps the shepherds held him. Perhaps not. But they made haste to see the Savior and see him they did. And their lives were changed. Have you met the Savior? How has it impacted you? Have you known his presence intimately?

Friday, December 2, 2022

Known

And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

Luke 2:17-18

Please read and/or listen to Luke 2:8-20 again today. The shepherds continue to be active distributors of the good news of great joy. We cannot know the full extent of the knowledge of the shepherds. Did Mary and Joseph tell them who the baby was? It seems they did not fully understand it themselves (see Luke 2:33). As soon as the shepherds left the intimate encounter, they began to make known what they had seen. Remember, they are the last people that other people want to be talking to—especially in the middle of the night or early in the morning. They prove that you do not need to have exhaustive knowledge about Jesus to make him known to other people. You can share with others what you know to be true about Jesus. You can share the intimate nature of the relationship that you have with Jesus, even if you don't fully know everything about him! People wondered at what the shepherds told them. It was bizarre. Even now, many people do not truly believe that Jesus is the Son of God. They know the story, they know the pictures, they know about the shepherds and the wise men. But unless those who have firsthand knowledge of Jesus tell them about Jesus, they will not know him. When you tell them about him, they will begin to wonder about what you have said. That seed planted will allow God to move in their hearts and will give them an opportunity to take hold of the good news of great joy for themselves. The shepherds actively distributed the news—will you? Today pray that God will allow you to talk about him to one person about the truth of Christmas!

Saturday, December 3, 2022

Praising

And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:20

Please read and/or listen to Luke 2:8-20 one more time today. Passively observing does not allow for the type of celebration that the shepherds experienced. That is why many people miss out on glorifying and praising God with such passion. Passivity does not lend itself to passionate displays that come from intentional encounters with the living God. When Jesus came, it was announced that his coming was good news of great joy. Good news is only good as it is allowed to impact your life. That is what happened to the shepherds. They were actively engaged in having this good news bring great joy into their lives, and it did. When they went back to their flocks, they were still outcasts in society, they were still considered unclean by the culture, they were still considered disreputable by those of the community of Bethlehem, but they had seen the King. They had been actively engaged in distributing the message of grace and their lives were changed. They now worshiped the one true God who sent his Son to be the Savior. Everything has changed. Jesus is born. A King is born this day in Bethlehem. Hallelujah! As you are in the community this Christmas, consider how your intimate encounter with the Savior of the world can help bring you to a place of glorifying and praising God for all that you have heard and seen and all that he has made known to you! Let's go make him known. Go tell it on the mountain—Jesus the Christ is born. Good news! Great Joy! Pray that God will awaken in you a fresh passion for him as you go through this Christmas season. Look for him in every moment. Seek to see his smiling face within the mystery. Amen.



Pastor Chuck Cervenka