

**Date:** 12-22-2019  
**Series:** Christmas Sermons 2019

## LESSONS ABOUT GOD FROM A STORY ABOUT SHEPHERDS (Luke 2:8-20)

**Intro video:** \_\_\_\_\_

**P & W:** Joy to the World (vv 1, 2, 4)  
O Come, All Ye Faithful (vv 1, 2, 3)  
Hark! The Herald Angels Sing (vv 1, 3)

**Prayer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Offertory:** Madelyn Wood

**P & W:** Silent Night (vv 1, 2)  
O Holy Night (vv 1, 3)

**Special:** Mary Did You Know? (Jeffrey Mingle)

**Lord's**

**Supper:** [Have men come forward]

**Luke 2:8-20**-----Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was 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, goodwill toward men!" <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup> And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. <sup>19</sup> But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. <sup>20</sup> Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

If we were in charge, we probably wouldn't have done it this way, but of all the possibilities in society, the first group of people God announces the birth of His Son to were shepherds.

Of course, all of you know that at the time of Christ shepherds were generally looked down on by people. Dr. Warren Wiersbe wrote:

By the nature of their work, shepherds were considered “unclean,” which meant they could not go to worship at the temple. Shepherds were not permitted to testify as witnesses in court either. So those whose lives were devoted to keeping the law looked down on them.

This morning, I would like us to consider three inspiring truths about God that we learn from the Christmas story of the shepherds. Our first one is this:

### 1. **He is impartial---He loves people the world considers as unimportant**

**Job 34:19---** He is not partial to princes, nor does He regard the rich more than the poor; for they are all the work of His hands.

In his book *The Best Kept Secret of Christian Mission*, John Dickson wrote these words:

Under God, my own conversion was the result of one person's willingness to embody the mission of the "friend of sinners." ... One of the relics of Australia's Christian heritage is the once-a-week Scripture lesson offered in many state high schools around the country. ... One of these Scripture teachers—Glenda was her name—had the courage to invite [my] entire class to her home for discussions about God. The invitation would have gone unnoticed, except that she added: "If anyone gets hungry I'll be making hamburgers, milkshakes, and scones." ... As I looked around the room at all my friends—all skeptics like me—I was amazed that this woman would open her home (and kitchen) to us. Some of [us] were among the worst "sinners" in our school: one was a drug user (and seller), one was a class clown and bully, and one was a petty thief with a string of [breaking-and-entering charges] to his credit.

I could not figure Brenda out. She was wealthy and intelligent. She had an exciting social life married to a leading Australian businessman. What was she thinking inviting us for a meal and discussion? At no point was this teacher pushy or preachy. Her style was completely relaxed and incredibly generous. When her VCR went missing one day, she made almost nothing of it, even though she suspected (quite reasonably) it was [someone from] our group. For me, her open, flexible, generous attitude toward us "sinners" was the doorway into a life of faith. As we ate and drank and talked, it was clear this was no missionary ploy on her part. **She truly cared for us and** treated us like friends or, perhaps more accurately, like sons. As a result, over the course of the next year, she introduced several of us from the class to the ultimate "friend of sinners," Jesus.

The first truth about God that we learn from the Christmas story of the shepherds is that **God is impartial---**He loves people the world considers as unimportant.

**But there is a second** truth we see here as well.

I find it interesting that the shepherds didn't go looking for God in the temple in Jerusalem 6 miles north of where they were---God came looking for them right where they were at. He shines His light on them in the midst of their darkness. Notice v. 9:

**2:9-11-----an angel** of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord

The angel tells them not to fear because he has great news for them---God is near! The long-awaited Messiah was born that very day in their city and His name is Immanuel---God with us!

**2. He is near---He comes to people where they are *at* rather than where they *ought to be***

(My testimony---how God sought me at a time I was not seeking Him **AT ALL!**)

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Lord's Supper (Bread)---Music by Madelyn Wood

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The first truth about God that we learn from the shepherds is that **God is impartial**---He loves people the world considers as unimportant. The **second** is that **God is near---He comes to people where they are *at* rather than where they *ought to be*.**

Our third lesson is this:

**3. He is thoughtful---His gift is for all people rather than a privileged few**

When you give someone a gift and they respond: "*Thank you **so much**...that was **so thoughtful** of you...*" it means that they recognize that you invested time and money to bring joy to their lives.

Jesus came to earth and invested His own life in order that we could have eternal life through faith in Him.

He died for every person --- the whole world (not just some selected group):

**2:10**---I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to **all people**.

God gave to us---all mankind---just what we needed:

<sup>11</sup> For there is born **to you** this day in the city of David **a Savior**, who is Christ the Lord.

[Have men stand; pass them juice, then quote "Our Greatest Need"]:

**Our Greatest Need**

If our greatest need had been information, **God would** have sent us an educator.

If our greatest need had been technology, **God would** have sent us a scientist.

If our greatest need had been money, **God would** have sent us an economist.

If our greatest need had been enjoyment, **God would** have sent us an entertainer.

But our greatest need was forgiveness, **so God sent** us a Savior.

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**Lord's Supper** (Juice)---music by Madelyn Wood

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**Special:** Noel (Teresa Titchywy)

**Closing words:**

**On February 24, 2001**, a one-year old Canadian girl named Erika Nordby somehow wandered out of her mother's bed and house and spent the entire night in the Edmonton winter.

When her mother, Leyla Nordby, found her, Erika appeared to be totally frozen. Her legs were stiff, her body frozen, and all signs of life appeared to be gone.

Erika was treated at Edmonton's Stollery Children's Health Center, and God helped doctors and rescue workers bring her back to life. To the amazement of all, there appeared to be no sign of brain damage, and doctors gave Erika a clear prognosis—she would soon be able to hop and skip and play like other girls her age.

Maybe you're here today and, even though people may not be aware of it, you are frozen spiritually. Your heart toward God and other people is hardened and cold like the little girl in the snow.

(Comments about our God---He loves you...He is near and wants to restore you to perfect spiritual health.)

(Word to unbelievers---God loves you as well and wants you to know that He has a gift that is for ALL PEOPLE)

(Invite to see me after church)

**Closing Video:** "Somewhere in Your Silent Night"

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**Closing Prayer:** Bob Vacendak