

RIVERDALE BAPTIST CHURCH
CHRISTMAS EVE 2016
LUKE 2:1-21

I want to thank you for coming tonight. We are privileged to have each of you. Tonight, I want to read from my favorite passage about the birth of Jesus: Luke 2. Listen as I read.

Let's look for a few minutes at the following:

I. THE GLORY OF THE LORD

That glory had been missing for some time! There had been times when God showed His glory in the temple and at other times in the Old Testament. But mankind had been operating at a deficit ever since he fell into sin (the Fall). Basically, you could say we had been working hard doing the best we can waiting for God to do something we could not do for ourselves. The very presence of God had been missing.

What is this glory? It is a physical manifestation of God's presence. He is greater than His creation, greater than anything Hollywood could dream up. When the angel appeared, the glory of God also appeared; it says "and the glory of the Lord shone around them." Now I do not know about you, but when it says "they were filled with fear," well I would be also. And you would be. You see, this glory was also a manifestation of God's holiness and power. And one thing I know: I am not holy and neither are you! None of us is. When the angel said "fear not," I would have been greatly

relieved because one thing I know I would not have been ready to meet God without a Savior!

One thing here, the glory these shepherds witnessed will one day be witnessed by you if you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior. There is an underlying truth here: the glory of heaven will be yours when Jesus brings you into His presence. And that all starts the moment you trust Him. But let's continue with the text. Next I want you to see...

II. THE GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

WHY IS IT GOOD NEWS?

- There IS a Savior!
- We do not have to wander with guilt and no peace and direction in life.
- We CAN experience a piece of heaven now (the deposit of the Holy Spirit).
- We CAN be set free from the guilt of sin.

NOTE IT IS GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY

- Why Great Joy? Because people have been searching all their lives for the forgiveness that Jesus alone can bring.
- In the midst of all the world's need and suffering, there IS a Savior! He cares for YOU. You are not alone! You can have Friend and Savior in Jesus that sticks closer than a brother! This is worthy of GREAT JOY!
- NOTE TOO THAT IT IS GOOD NEWS OF GREAT JOY **FOR ALL PEOPLE!**

III. HOW IS THIS GOOD NEWS OF HIS BIRTH TRANSLATED INTO SOMETHING FOR US TODAY?

- This Babe will grow to be a man, but not just any man: the unique God/Man.
- He will go a cruel cross and die a death meant for each of us. The Bible says that God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us! Oh friend, Jesus came for you and me.
- The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah said that God would put a “new heart” within us. He would change us in the inner man. Isaiah said our sins would be made “whiter than snow” ... in other words we would be CLEAN. Oh friend, are you clean tonight? Jesus came to take your sin(s) and make you clean from the inside out.
- All you need to do is turn from self and give your life to Jesus. If you want to do that tonight, here is a suggested prayer that you can use (but Jesus knows your heart, so the right words are not important; what is important is your heart yielded to Jesus).
 - *Lord Jesus I need You. I am turning from my old sinful life right now. And I am trusting in Your sacrifice for me on the Cross. I ask you to save me and forgive me of my sin. I yield to You right now. I ask You to take control of my life and make me the kind of person You want me to be. I want to know how to follow You. Please give me a new heart and show me the way. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

If you prayed that prayer, please fill out a card in the pew and give it to the pastor or another staff person right after the service. And if you prayed that prayer, you will want to do what's next:

IV. WHEN ANYONE KNOWS OF THE SAVIOR, THEY MUST TELL ABOUT HIM TO OTHERS!

Oh friend, Jesus is for you today. He is THE GIFT OF CHRISTMAS. Jesus is your King, your PERSONAL SAVIOR. God has come in all His Glory in the Person of His Son just for YOU. You should feel very special this Christmas Eve. Jesus has come for you. He is your personal Savior and He loves you more than any Person ever did or ever will. He is real and He is here! The first thing the shepherds did was to come in awe, in respect, in wonder, in joy. Then "they made known the saying that had been told them about this Child."

Would you join together as we close out tonight's worship by singing *Silent Night*? Those with candles can light them up as we begin to sing.

God bless you for coming tonight. And Merry Christmas to each of you. We WILL be here tomorrow morning at 11 AM for more joyous worship and a celebration of the birth of our wonderful Savior.