

The Weary World Rejoices – Luke 2:8-20

*“We pursue being a disciple making family: surrendered to Jesus, transformed by the gospel, and **saturated in His word.**”*

The very familiar section of the Christmas story can lead us to neglect the need to truly mediate and apply this text to our lives. We are all guilty of using this text as an antidote to a “materialistic” or “consumeristic” hole we fall into during this busy season. It really is the first place we go to in order to “snap” out of things and focus on the right thing. I’m not beating up making sure we are focused on the correct thing but we can become desensitized to the depth of meaning. Let’s take a look at a couple of questions.

Discussion Questions* -- *do not feel the pressure to cover them all

1. In this text there is a divine announcement from God to mankind. This “heavenly messenger” or angelic intermediary is speaking directly from heaven to broken man. The shepherds were considered the lowest rung on the social ladder. They were nobodies. We truly see the delineation between holy and unholy. What stands out to you about this announcement? (i.e. what must it have been like for the angel to see Jesus in flesh of a baby?, how sinful we are, etc.). When the army of angels came to praise God they were giving praise to God. The shepherds later are praising God and sharing the good news. How are we as Christians like the angel and shepherds? (i.e. proclaim good news, worship/praise, etc.). What hinders us from praising and proclaiming and what spurs us on?
2. The angel makes the announcement to a weary world to “fear not” and behold good news and great joy. We live in a very weary world, even among Christians. Our fear may not be the overwhelming of the glory of God, but our fear may be the realities of navigating life in a broken world. Health, finances, future, death, etc. The rescue of Christ provides us with good news and the opportunity for a life of great joy. What steals your joy? How can this good news that Christ has come for us all help us walk with unmistakable joy? Who do you know that exemplifies this joy?
3. There was a response to the birth of Jesus by the shepherds. They quickly responded to the angels and “found” Jesus. This word means that they sought him. The only sign they had was that he would be wrapped and lying in a manger. The wise men had the star and the shepherds had a baby in a manger. I wonder if there was some awkwardness in the search. We as believers should continue to seek after Jesus. What are the ways we experience awkwardness today as we seek to walk with Christ? How much does this awkwardness detour you? (i.e. don’t share with others because of rejection, fear, laziness, etc.)

4. As the shepherds left, they were praising and glorifying God much like the angels did. The reality is the public ministry of Jesus didn't begin until 30 years later. I wonder if there was some difficulty with what the shepherds experienced and the reality of the timing of His ministry. How do you handle what seems to be delays in your life between what God says He will do and the fruition of his provision? Do you find these moments to make you "weary?" How do you continue to remain joyful and celebrate the good news of the rescue even when things may be moving slowly?
5. Much like Peter and John in Acts 4:20, the shepherds could not help but speak about what they had seen and heard. They were telling others what they had seen. Jesus said out of the overflow of our heart our mouth speaks. What is the correlation with our lack of spiritual conversations with a weary world and where our heart really is? How might we take steps to improve in this area? How have you seen this play out in your own life? Are there times that it was easier to speak about the things of God to others?