



The unfolding of your words gives light.

To Seek and to Save

An Exposition of the Gospel of Luke

¹⁵When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another^a, “Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us^b.” ¹⁶So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger^c. ¹⁷When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child^d. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds^e. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart^f. ²⁰The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen^g, just as had been told them^{a, b}.

^a 2:15 **When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another.** Angels do not normally stick around when they visit. The men were evidently speechless while the angels were present, but such visits always demand a response.

^b 2:15 **Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.** When an angel spoke, Zacharias doubted and Mary asked “How?” but they still responded to the visits. Here the shepherds went to investigate. Note the responses to other angelic visits in Scripture:

- Abraham and Sarah made a baby.
- Lot got out of Sodom before it was destroyed.
- Daniel prophesied.
- Isaiah prophesied.
- The women at the empty tomb spread the message of the resurrection.

^c 2:16 **So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.** Luke notes that the men wasted no time. Five out of six New Testament uses the verb meaning “to hurry” are from the pen of Luke. He used it of Jesus calling Zaccheus down from a tree (Luke 19:5-6) and of Paul’s rush to get to Jerusalem by Pentecost (Acts 20:16).

There is no mention of shock at the surroundings. Things were just as the angel said they would be. God chose the right fellows to witness this humble birth. Some of them may have been born in similar circumstances.

^d 2:17 **When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.** Whom did they tell? Probably anyone they could find. Matthew Henry compared these men to the lepers of 2 Kings 7:9 who found that the Arameans had abandoned their siege outside the walls of Samaria and fled. They said, “This is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent...let us go and tell the king’s household.”

^e 2:18 **And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.** The people “marveled.” This is the identical usage of the word that described the reaction of the priests to the naming of John the Baptist by his father. What other response would fit such a story? Like the resurrection, the story was verified by more than the two or three witnesses required by the Scriptures.

^f 2:19 **But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.** The word “treasured” is used in the New Testament of preserving new wine (Matthew 9:17). The word translated “pondering” is used only by Luke in the New Testament, usually of a conference for war (Luke 14:31) or another action (Acts 4:15; 20:14). Mary collected all these events in her mind so she could later sort them and put together a mental scrapbook.

^g 2:20 **The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen.** They went back. To what? Same old job. They did not become career missionaries but they did enter full time Christian service. The same old work was done with a new driving force.

The Gospel of Luke
Steven Svendsen, Sr.

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Their hearts overflowed with a fresh perspective on the living God. The work of shepherding became meaningful when they became aware that God was present with His people. The biblical doctrine of vocation teaches that there is not a line between “secular work” and “full time Christian service.” Every task must be done *Soli Deo Gloria*, whether we are paid to do it or not.

^a 2:20 **just as had been told them.** In other words, the angel had spoken of God getting glory and men getting peace. The shepherds confirmed that they had found the God-glorifying sight they had expected.

^b 2:15-20 When God shows Himself to you, the right response includes obedience, investigation, awe and sanctified thinking. Mundane tasks are very different when our hearts are full of Godward thoughts. The workplace of the shepherds did not change, but the workers did. Mary’s circumstances did not change. She would still have to carry out the everyday tasks that mothers of infants must carry out. The difference was that she was full of the images of God’s faithfulness to His promises.

You need to approach your everyday tasks with the same kind of driving force that changed these people. How?

1. Develop a healthy curiosity to find out all you can about what God is doing. What is it that is keeping you anxious right now? Talk to God about it. Find out how He worked when characters of Scripture were in similar circumstances.
 - When Joseph’s brothers mistreated him, God was preparing a way to save His people from starvation.
 - When Moses herded sheep for forty years, God was preparing to deliver Israel from bondage and preparing Moses to shepherd that flock for forty more years.
 - When Saul drove David into exile, God was using David to fortify Judah’s interests in Philistine territory.
2. Answer the question: “Where is the Lord Jesus in this picture?”
 - Is He there when your pile of work seems as deep as the depravity of your co-workers? Yes.
 - Is He there when you are making bricks and having to gather your own straw? Yes.
 - Is He there when you are washing endless loads of laundry? Yes, the Son of man came not to be served but to serve.
3. Show people where the glory is. If the whole earth is full of it, maybe folks need someone to point it out.
4. Protect the memory of what God has done. Preserve it like you would anything you treasure. Some people take greater pains rehearsing their grievances than they do the faithfulness of God.

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