

Good News

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] What I should say first is take your Bible and open it.

And turn in your Bible this morning to Luke chapter 2. I'm going to read from the text beginning in verse 8.

In the same region there were shepherds out in the field keeping watch over their flocks 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 fear.

And the angel said to them, And this will be a sign for you.

You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.

[1:40] 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. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told to them concerning the child.

And all those who heard it wondered at what the shepherds had told them. Let's pray.

Our Father God, this morning it is so easy for us to be distracted.

And we confess that we are dependent upon the word that You've given to us. And the ministry of the indwelling Spirit in those of us who know Christ.

[2:58] And the convicting power of the Spirit in the lives of all who are here. To lift up Jesus that He who is our Savior and our Lord.

The one that someday we will enjoy forever in eternity. Is the one that is justly worshipped here as He is in heaven.

We pray that our affections will be warmed by the passage that we study together. That our thoughts and interest in the Lord Jesus Christ will be stirred and strengthened.

And as a result of our attention to the word. That what we have described in 2 Corinthians chapter 3 might be true. That we would grow from glory to glory as we behold as in a mirror.

The truth of the Lord Jesus Christ. And enjoy the working of the Spirit of God in us. This morning. And we ask this in Jesus' name and for His glory.

[4:08] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I want you to stop and think just for a moment this morning at a question that has really, I'd say close to obsessed me for the last several weeks.

And that really is, why did God choose to make the announcement of His Son, our Savior, the one on whom we rest for all eternity?

Why did He choose to make the announcement of His incarnation in such an unassuming and quiet way? I didn't do it, but just imagine that this morning when it came time for the preaching of the sermon, I had had John ask all of you to stand.

And then I had walked in to hail to the chief. Now, think about that.

It would have been so inappropriate for me. Isn't that true? It would have been wrong. Now, had the president actually arrived here, I mean, there would have been a motorcade, and there would have been helicopters, and there would have been police officers over every overpass, and his transfer from Port Columbus over to here would have been, all the streets would have been blocked off.

[5:54] Every police officer would have been called in off of duty, and it would have been just a, and then he walks in, and how, you know, even though it was church, probably someone would have said, we ought to play

hail to the chief, you know. It's like, it is the president.

Here I am. So why did Jesus come in such a humble fashion?

I think it's pretty important for you to think about. How many of you, by the way, as this little sidebar, have been eating in a restaurant with your wife or your husband, and they happen to order something that's really outstanding?

At least they think so. And they're kind of, how many of you, when you are enjoying food, make good sounds? You're like, mmm, ah, man. In fact, I am that way to the point that my wife sometimes, when she is, you know, just stop.

No, it's like, that adds. How many of you understand that that kind of amps it up? Just go ahead and verbalize it. Mmm, mmm. And so here we are, we're in the restaurant, and Judas says, man, this, you know, this salmon is just exceptional.

[7:07] But, you know, in order to give credit, and I don't mind salmon, I'm just kind of over, just, but in order to give credit to the value of that taste, how many of you go ahead and stuff a couple extra fries in your mouth, a little bit of ketchup on top of that, and then you just pop the salmon in on top behind it, right?

You don't do that. I mean, if you're serious about the taste, you want to give credit to your wife's appreciation. I mean, top off, what you do is you rinse your mouth out a little bit with water, you know, and switch it around, and now you don't spit it out in a restaurant.

I understand that. You swallow it, but, you know. And then, when your palate's marginally clean, then you take the taste. Am I right? And you say, oh, that's good.

That's good. I would ask that by the help of the Holy Spirit, you kind of clean your palate away from the garbage and think carefully about why Jesus chose to come like he did.

Why did God choose to announce the birth of his son the way he did?

[8:28] Well, as we think about this, and I think there's tremendous value in the thought, I want us to begin at least by following the text here and recognizing that he announced this to an interesting group.

As we open the lesson this morning, we look there and we see that Christ's first earthly arrival was not announced in a dramatic fashion.

Instead, his birth took place in a neglected corner of Israel in a shack that was normally used to shelter animals. I want you to pick up, if you would, there in verse 8 and just remind yourself of how the Christmas story plays out.

And we read there that the angel of the Lord in verse 9 appears to these shepherds that were marked out in verse 8. They're out in the field. They're taking care of sheep.

And we have kind of idealized shepherds and sheep because, you know, after all, it's part of Christmas.

[9:39] And by the way, how many of you know that bales of hay were like nine bucks a bale? Is that over the top or what? I mean, it's like, I can't believe that.

By the way, I didn't buy these. Sharma lent them to me. The pickup truck is where they go back afterwards. Horses need them. But, you know, I want you to recognize that this passage gives us a picture of some very unusual people chosen by God to bring some pretty important information to. And I do want you to understand that shepherds were not well respected. In fact, you don't need to turn there, but just kind of turn back.

Think in your mind back to Genesis chapter 46 in verse 24. Remember when Joseph is in the land of Egypt and it comes time to bring Jacob and the whole clan into Egypt.

And Pharaoh says to Jacob, so what do you do for a living? How many of you have those questions? Well, I'm a doctor. I'm a shepherd.

[10:47] What? And it says this, that the Egyptians abhorred. Shepherds were an abomination to Egyptians.

Now, the Bible picture of shepherds is a little more positive. I mean, after all, how many of you know the shepherd's psalm?

I mean, every one of us, right? Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd. And we think about the fact that God in his care for us, he's like a shepherd. In fact, Old Testament kings like to carry that idea a little bit.

But it was more idealized than in practical reality because the truth of the matter is is that shepherds were not well regarded in Jewish culture.

So much so that if Jim Bob had seen Bubba murdering Sally.

[11:46] You got that? I mean, are we tracking so far? Jim Bob saw Bubba murder Sally, and Jim Bob was a shepherd. When they asked publicly, did anybody see Bubba murder Sally?

And Jim Bob raised his hand and said, I did. They'd say, disqualified. Shepherds were not allowed to ever give testimony publicly.

God chose a shepherd group. To be the ones that he announced the coming of his son to. And I want you to stop and think with me just for a moment.

Why did he do that? Why would he have the Lord of glory come the first time in such an unassuming, quiet manner to a corner neglected and then announce his coming to people that by the community and culture were not chosen and regarded?

Oh, by the way, so that you understand, there were some other people that knew about Jesus' birth. How many of you know the wise men? Where did they come from? By the way, they were what? What's the word for them?

[13:05] They were pagans. Pagans. Remember, they showed up and they said, all right, where is the king of the Jews? And Herod was pretty lit up about this, remember?

And he says, when you find him, you come back and let me know where he is. And they were advised by angels to go a different way. And as a result of that, Herod slaughtered all the children in that area up to two years old.

Shepherds and pagans were the first ones who were given advice about the coming of Christ, Joseph and Mary.

And so I want you to kind of chew on this. Why? Why? Why? How many of you understand that one of the more important questions to answer when you're studying the Scriptures is that why question? Why did he do it this way?

Why is that here? What is its value to me? And I have to confess that as this question just lingered in my mind over and over again through the last several weeks in particular, I could not come to one particular passage that said thus, well, here's the answer.

[14:19] But on the other hand, there is much in the Scripture that indicates the gentleness of our God in meeting our need and his readiness to condescend on our behalf.

Let me have you think with me just for a moment and kind of frame this out. Job. Remember Job? The King James says he was an upright man who eschewed evil.

How many of you like that word, eschewed? Practice it at home and say it three or four times around the dinner table, okay? He was a good guy. And God allowed some real difficulties to come into his life.

And in the face of all these difficulties, you remember that Job finally at one point in frustration says, man, I wish there was someone who would put his hand on God and his hand on man and kind of bring them together.

A daisman. Someone who could be a go-between. Remember when Moses went up the mount to receive the law and God revealed himself to the nation of Israel and he comes back, Moses comes back, and he lays out the glory of the revelation of God and the people, they're kind of overwhelmed by the reality of the glory of God and the word that he has for them.

[15:41] And they say, Moses, Moses, would you do the talking with him and then you come down here and communicate with us? We're terrified. God in his awesome glory, knowing our frame and our dust, chose to come with unbelievable humility and in that humility to reveal himself as our Savior.

I do want you to understand this issue of God coming down, for one, reflects this matter of humility in a profound fashion. Several different things come to mind.

I do want you to understand that what it says in Scripture is that the ones who are blessed are those who are humble and broken. And here is God presenting his son in a humble fashion and he reminds us of the reality that the ones who receive the blessings of God are those who are humbled

and contrite.

I think about Isaiah chapter 66 where it says this, that the prophet recounts and says, who is it that God reveals himself to? The one who is humble and broken and trembles at my word.

I couldn't help as I was praying earlier today to stop and think about the culture we have that pushes against the idea of humility.

[17:16] I mean, what kid doesn't go to school and hear about from the time they walk in through the doors of the school to the time they at least come out. At least in the professional context, you're special, you're the best, you're the winner.

Everybody gets, you know, we're full of ourselves. And our community encourages that. And yet the Scripture tells us that the one that God reveals himself to is the one who recognizes his sin and is humble in the prospect of his soul's condition.

I think also of this business of who God calls. Turn over in your Bible just for a moment to 1 Corinthians chapter 1. 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 26 through 29.

The church at Corinth was a church that was full of people that had a fairly inflated view of themselves.

Hello? Let me give you a couple hints of what were indicators that they had an inflated view of themselves. Okay? Number one, inflated self-appreciation is invariably the cause of a lot of dissension and bickering among people.

[18:44] How many of you understand that? Overly simplifying it, let me put it this way. When Judith and I were younger and our four children were still with us and we would decide that we were going to go out to dinner, we would ask early on, this is before we learned the importance of the appropriate approach.

We would say, all right, all right, where would you like to go to dinner? And we'd kind of address it as a general view. And guess what would happen in the back of the car? We had four professional opinions of where was best to eat.

And everyone not only proposed where the best place was to go, but on top of that, they would then begin throwing stones. You want to go to McDonald's? I can't believe... They were over the top with approval of their own and disapproval of everybody else's vote.

Why do we have arguments and dissent and irritable attitudes? Full of ourselves. Corinth, full of themselves.

And Paul says, a remedy to your being so full of yourself is understanding, number one, why God picked you and where He drew you from. That's what we're dealing with there in 1 Corinthians chapter 1.

[20:01] And we mark out what it says there in verse 26. For consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to the worldly standards. Not many were powerful.

Not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong. God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being may boast in the presence of God.

Everywhere the shepherds turned, they had people telling them consistently, you ain't nobody. Nobody. And God shows up and says, and by the way, it's the nobodies that I want to use to draw attention to the fact that the Savior of the world has come.

More importantly than that, though, it is appropriate that our Savior who came in humiliation should present His coming in a humble fashion.

So remind yourself, Christ humbled Himself to become our Savior. Turn in your Bible, if you would, to Philippians chapter 2. You're there in Luke. Keep your finger because we're coming back to it.

[21:22] But I want you to turn to Philippians chapter 2 and mark what it says in verse 5 through 9. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of a man.

Hey, guys, listen. To lay aside His regal splendor as the second person of the Godhead and to take upon Himself the fashion of a man was the incredible, unfathomable step of humility.

And so to choose to come in that profoundly humble way and then to come in with any kind of flair and panache would have come off actually being inconsistent.

And so I want you to understand that as the Bible tells us, Christ came with this humility for our sakes. And He did it so that He would be humbled unto death, even the death on the cross for us. I think about another passage in relationship to this over in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 9. And in essence what it says is this, is though He was rich, He became poor for us. How many of you ever stop and realize that the shepherds, the manger, is not an idealized little Christmas decoration, it is a reminder of the abject humility with which Christ came to meet our broken state?

[23:28] So how else to announce the unbelievable grace of God in sending His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who willingly humbled Himself to be my Savior and die in my place?

How else to make that announcement but to do it with the same kind of humility that we find in the passage of Scripture that we look at this morning? But I want you to look at a second part of the text this morning because it's not just the fact that Jesus came and His coming was something that was announced by shepherds.

That's a small sidebar and an issue that, while it deserves our attention, is not the center of the story. I want you to recognize what we find there in the passage in verse 10.

It says, So I want you to think about this issue of good news for all.

It was for the nation. It was for the world. And I want you to stop and think with me just for a moment about what that little word good news means. Am I right?

[24:45] Tonight in the program, Steve, I know you're the one who rocks it out, so I got to, you're the, aren't we doing this good news number? John, where are you? Way back. It's, by the way, little solicitation off the page.

The Christmas program is knockout good. I went home and I told my wife, she's in the nursery so she can't hear, don't tell her what I said. Everybody always does.

I came home, I said, man, it was a really good Christmas program. It was really good. I mean, by the way, clapping is allowed. I will clap if nobody else does tonight.

It was, but one of the numbers in particular that I really like, I did not know that white Anglo-Saxons could be as into it.

I'm a lot of friends. I know, I know, I grew up with that, don't you be moving like that, that could be dancing, you know.

[26:00] Okay. Okay. Good news. What's the good news? I'm not going to bore you with the details, but not bore you, that's not the way I want to say it.

I'm not going to overweight you with the Greek here, but the word euangelion, which is the word from which we get good news, is a word that was used in the Roman world for special things.

You know, we overuse words and they kind of lose their effect. It's like, outstanding, you know. My favorite one is when you go to the restaurant, I'm picking on restaurants today, but, you know, and you tell the waitress that you're going to order something and she says, excellent choice.

Like, give me a break. Every time I've been here you've said the same thing, you know. It's like, really? I'm going to have a hamburger again? Excellent choice.

You know, sometimes we overdo words. euangelion was not a word that was overdone. It was a word that when Luke penned it, had a fairly narrow use and understanding in the ancient world.

[27:23] It was a word that was used to kind of announce exceptional things. Two primary illustrations come to mind, maybe three.

One was that when an emperor had a son born, this was the heir, a parent, and he was the one the kingdom was going to be handed off to and everybody could, okay, we're not going to go through a messy, bloody kind of transition when the king dies.

Maybe be reasonable. And when the king had a son, it was like, this is euangelion, this is good news. Another thing that really brought about good news is when the army came back victorious from a campaign that had defeated a mortal enemy, the news would come and it would, good news, the Roman legion has won.

Another good news would be when a city that had irritated the emperor and all the legion had kind of circled around the city and there they were.

And by the way, I want you to know that the Roman legion was not someone to mess with. So there's the foreign legion, the Roman legion around the city and they send out delegates and say, we're really sorry, we're sorry, we offended the emperor, we're going to pay all our taxes back and you don't have to kill us, we'll be good people and good news, you're not going to be slaughtered, right?

[28:57] Wow! That's good news. And so here, you get this picture, here in Luke, the angels say, don't you be afraid, I bring you good news.

What is the good news? You see, the good news that we find here is one that deserves great joy and that's the thing I want you to recognize.

woven into this passage is the reality that there is something that God is doing for us that is incredible.

I wonder this morning as you stop and think about it, whether or not every time you think about your salvation, you do not kind of thrill at the thought of it.

Stop just for a moment. Check your pulse. Mine is about 62. Sometimes when I'm worked up it goes a little higher, but you know. Hey, if you're a Christian, if you know Jesus, the thought of your salvation is good news and it ought to cause your soul to thrill.

[30:16] So here we look at this passage and we understand that the great joy of this blessing is not freedom from tax or deliverance from having your head cut off.

It's more than that. It's of eternal consequence and this blessing as we read in the passage here is good news not only for the Jews but for the entire world. What is it? Salvation and forgiveness for sin is available to all because of Christ.

That's what this is saying. Salvation and forgiveness from sin available to all because of Christ.

Now Mark, if you will, there at the last point as you look there in verse 11 it says, For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior.

What does it say to us when you read that word Savior? what does it say about you when you admit that you need a Savior?

I want you to think about that because when we come to grips with the reality of our own condition and we are persuaded by the Spirit of God at just how miserable and how broken we are it becomes reasonable for us to recognize I need a Savior.

[31:43] I need someone who can do for me what I cannot do for myself. And so I want you to recognize this morning as you look at this passage that what the Scripture makes clear is that salvation is through God's Son.

That's what happened at Christmas. This little child would become our Savior Savior. Saving us from our greatest fear and our greatest problem namely from the holy wrath of God against sin and how did He do that?

I want you to recognize as we look at the passage and think about this issue of Christ being our Savior that it is fair for us to understand that at the heart of this is first of all a recognition that man cannot save himself.

Man cannot save himself. I cannot help but think of a little review that I did earlier this week doing some reading about Islam and then making some comparison with Hinduism and I was doing that just because of all things happening in the world today and we hear a lot about Islam, Islam, Islam and I recognize that it kind of has a presence in a lot of our thinking but it is not the only religion out there and having grown up in India I saw that Muslims and Hindus hated each other as much as you can imagine.

In fact it was not atypical for slaughters to take back and forth and both actually proposed that man ultimately has responsibility for the outcome of his soul in that his own effort is what is at the heart of his redemption.

[33:27] How many of you would like to have your salvation based upon your own efforts? Think about that. God's The only reason you shake your head is because by the spirit of God you have become fully persuaded of your own complete inability.

Were it not for the grace of God which lovingly revealed to you your inability to save yourself you would be like the rest who when you asked them how is it that you're going to get to heaven guess what their answer usually is?

Well I'm doing the best I can. I hope he grades on the curve. I'm at least better than some of the people I know who live in my neighborhood. I mean I do go to church occasionally and they never go.

They got a boat. You know it's really bugging me but no. The truth of the matter is is that man cannot save himself and underlying the reality of the need that I have for a savior is that I can't do anything to change me.

As a sidebar one of the things that I so love about the gospel is the reality that because of salvation not only do I have the certainty of a home in heaven but I also have great confidence that because of what he has done in me Tim Kenoyer doesn't have to stay the way he has been.

[34:55] I can change by grace and you can too. I want you to recognize as we think about this matter of salvation man cannot save himself we accept that but there's another thing that that stands out in this verse and when it says good news namely you have a savior we recognize that only God can save fallen man.

That's why God sent his son the Lord Jesus Christ. That's why Jesus came and died on the cross and rose again. He did all that because salvation is of the Lord.

How many of you recognize and kind of have it stick in your mind that actually the name of Jesus means what? How many of you know what it means? Jesus, Yehoshua, God saves.

Even in giving Jesus the name that he received what God chose to do was communicate to us that we cannot save ourselves that God has to be the one that saves us.

And so I want you to recognize that that first Christmas morn when the shepherds with that rejected attitude in the community that they kind of endured under, they received the information.

[36:11] I want you to know there's good news because today in the city of Bethlehem is born your Savior, God having done this for you.

So you look at the passage here and bring it together, it says, this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord. So let me ask you a couple questions as I close this morning and have you think with me about it.

First of all, very practically, have you come broken and wounded by your sin to God and asked Him to be your Savior?

Have you confessed the need you have for Christ and recognized that the absolute darkness of your soul has no remedy apart from the work of God in saving you?

And I would encourage you as you sit here this morning, don't just think to yourself, well, hey, listen, I grew up in this church, man, I've heard this a thousand times. Do not think that sitting in a pew is a guarantee of salvation.

[37:19] Do not think that going to a Juana, do not think that anything apart from broken, contrite humility and dependence upon God being your Savior is remedy for the need of your soul.

And it takes humility to be able to come to Him and say, look, I stand condemned before God and I realize the bankruptcy of my soul. I need Christ to be my Savior. Incidentally, let me tell you this, if you're sitting here this morning and you are one who still is resisting the grace of God, let me appeal to you, practically speaking, how much more evidence do you need of how messy your life can get?

Make sense? Apart from God and His grace, our lives are a mess. And I would appeal to you this morning, say, I've got enough information.

I don't need to have any more experience. I need Jesus as my Savior and I recognize that. On the other hand, let me ask you this. Have you discovered the joy of complete forgiveness for all of your sins?

Has that happened? Does that thought resonate and make a difference in the life that you live? Right? By nature, by nature, it's fairly easy for us to become kind of focused on the circumstantial issues around us and take our eyes off of the absolute certainty of our salvation and our eternal destiny.

[38:57] Isn't that right? Huh? And I want to encourage you this morning as you stop and consider this wonderful, wonderful news that we find in

Luke that here is this kernel of information about the reality of God being our Savior.

And when you, who are children of the living God, hear that truth, it ought to make a difference in your life.

I got to tell you, I look forward to this evening's Christmas program. How many of you are in for cold chills? Do you like cold chills?

How many of you, I get cold chills. I'm a cold chills specialist. I'm not talking about the heating. It's over the top. I'm talking, I just, I get those, it happens. Hair kind of stands up on the back of my neck.

Listen to some of the singing tonight. But that's not to be compared to the joy of my salvation. What about you?

[40:01] What about you? Let's close in prayer. Our Father God, this morning as we stop and think about the absolute wonder of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, we marvel that you who abide in heaven, who have no need for us, nevertheless, willingly, sent your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to take upon Himself the absolute humiliation of being a man instead of just the glory of heaven, and He became a man for our sakes.

We're thankful that He came to be our Savior, that He lived here, that He died on the cross and rose again, that all who believe in Him might have everlasting life. And this morning as we think about the gospel, we're thankful for what Jesus has done for us.

And I ask practically that those who are here that do not know Christ will be drawn to confess their sins and believe in Jesus alone. I pray, Lord, also for our baptism now as we have the privilege of hearing one young man share the testimony of what you did in saving him, that we would thrill together at the good work of God and broken and ruined sinners.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.