

# From Cradle to Cross

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- [ 0 : 00 ]     Take your Bibles, if you would, and turn with me to the book of Luke, chapter 2. I don't know if you know this, but Brother David wrote that song and the music.
- I can't write a poem, much less a song, and I definitely couldn't find any music if I tried. So that was a blessing, my brother. Thank you very much.
- Amen. Before I jump into the message, I'd just kind of like you to look at this scripture and think with me a second, which that's what we're going to do the whole time.
- But, you know, when you think about Christmas, and you probably get around with your family, and you probably open the Bible, and you probably read a Christmas story from the Bible when you're having your family Christmas, and it becomes a routine, and to have it, and you don't pay as much attention to what the passage is saying.
- And I'm not blaming you. It's just natural. I mean, my daddy read a Christmas story to us as a kid. My grandkids memorized the entire thing. A couple of years, we just said, hey, all nine young, stand up and say it.
- [ 1 : 06 ]     So we didn't read it. We just listened to it quoted. And they can go a long ways, and they do it in rhythm, and they do all of that. I just want you to imagine what's going on. There's this young lady, and she's pregnant, and she hasn't had sex.
- No man's touched her. And she's riding with her husband, and she's going to the city. And while she's on the way to the city, some shepherds are just taking care of their flock.
- They're out in the country, alone and cold and whatever it is, the temperature of the year. And they're dealing with the elements out there. And nights can be longer, and sounds can be louder.
- And probably never done this. When y'all go camping, you go camping in a campground with a bathhouse two yards down the way. But they're out. I mean, they're camping.
- They're going to go find a rock when they need to do some things or go behind a tree. And they're hearing things. And all of a sudden, out of nowhere, this bright light and this mighty angel and this glory of God shines in verse 9.
- [ 2 : 15 ]     It's the angel of the Lord. That's usually a term used for Jesus himself showing up. And he stands up and goes, hey guys, I got news for you. Now you might say, well, what's the big deal?
- And I'm going to try to help you with that this morning. But he says in verse 10, y'all need to be afraid. I'm here with really good news. Look at verse 10. Underline good tidings.
- Good news. That actually is the very meaning of world evangelism. It's the meaning of gospel. It's world changing good news.
- And it's not bad news. Look at it. It's of great joy. Underline that in verse 10. It's of great joy. And then underline this. And it's for everybody.
- I ain't talking to a bunch of common everyday shepherds. These guys, they kind of smell. They live outside. They don't have a shower just around the corner.
- [ 3 : 15 ]     And they deal with sheep. And they sleep on the ground. And they eat next to a campfire. They smell like hickory smoke, you know.

And sheep poop. And sweat. And all of that out there. Common everyday people. That maybe no one would really be all that important about.

The fact is when they got to Egypt and they were shepherds, Joseph told them this is way back in their history. But Joseph said, Egyptians hate shepherds. Egyptians hate shepherds.

And said, so I'm going to put you in a part of the country where nobody has to see you. I'm going to ship you off to the corner somewhere. And they did that. These are shepherds. And they are told in verse 11, today there is born a Savior.

Need to underline that. Now, you know, if you're not a Bible person, I know you are. But when we're telling this, maybe they don't realize what was the purpose. What was the need of a Savior?

[ 4 : 17 ] What's the big deal? In fact, as you might want to mark in verse 11, I'm probably going to tell you this again. But Savior Christ and Lord are all right there together. He's the Savior.

He's the anointed Messiah, sent one from God. And he is the Lord, the King. He is the King. In verse 13, they're praising God.

And in verse 14, they say, glory to God in the highest and on earth. Underline this, peace. Now, you might be thinking, well, we have plenty of peace.

I live in the United States of America. Peace. And he said, in goodwill toward men. I'm going to get you in this in a minute. But do you understand who's saying this? The offended God.

The offended God says, I'm here to make peace. And I'm here to bring the news to you. And I'm here to show you my goodwill.

[ 5 : 18 ] I'm here to show you just how good I am. Go with me, if you would, to verse 12. Luke chapter 2 and verse 12. The Christmas story brings the promise of peace and goodwill.

This is a sign of you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes like in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest.

Boy, praise the God of heaven. And he's the one that's bringing peace on earth and goodwill toward man. The need for peace is based on the fact that God and man are at war.

I need you to let that sink in just a second. See, God and man are at war. You know, you've read the stories of the end of World War II.

You've seen the movie flicks. You've seen the pictures that they post. You've seen the end of war. And we haven't known one of those big wars in my lifetime. Vietnam was big, but it wasn't that front and center like World War II had been.

[ 6 : 29 ] Not everyone was involved. But God and man have been at war. Because man decided to live like he wanted to. And he decided to go against what God wanted.

He decided to do it his own way. Go, if you would, to Isaiah chapter 53 and verse 6. Or just write it there on the margin of your Bible.

You understand what's happened, don't you? God made man. Man belongs to God. And God gets through making man. And man decides, underlining that verse, to go astray.

To get off the path. To get out of the allotted area. To not do what God wanted them to do. They went astray. Now when I was a boy, living on a farm, animals often go astray.

And they do that by tearing down fences, jumping fences. If some dingbat from the city happens to come onto your property and leave the gate open, they'll all find out how to get out. And so then my neighbors had called me a mile away.

- [ 7 : 35 ] And they'd say, Austin, your pigs are down here. Now when my pigs went astray or my cows, occasionally my horse, I was not really nice to them. To be honest with you, I started driving them back.
- They won't come the way I wanted to. I carried a stick. Don't call PETA, but I hit them. And I pushed them and I goaded them and I trapped them. I was all the way home. I mean, I'm hot and sweaty because they got out of the way.
- I didn't go with good tidings of great joy. And I had no idea of peace in my mind. All I thought was, you're going to be bacon this fall.
- So get to the house. They turned everyone to his own way. Underline that in your Bible. Because every friend you have and your mother and your brother and your cousin and your neighbor, you need to understand there's this thing going on between God and them.
- Because God has a way and your family has a way and you have a way or had a way. And when we do that, we are not at peace with God. I think we like to soften that and think God loves everybody.
- [ 8 : 41 ] He does. But there are consequences to sin. The Bible says in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 16 that God offered them the tree of life.
- He offered them all the wonderful things, but they chose to do exactly what he told them not to do. In Genesis chapter 2 and verse 16, the Lord God commanded man saying, Of every tree you may eat.
- It's in this garden. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in it, in the day you eat it, you will surely die. Everybody likes to make like God was some kind of tyrannical bad monster who said, I've just got a whole bunch of temptation out there and I just want you to mess up so I can come after you.
- But that's not really the story. The real of the story is you got this massive garden and right over there is one tree you're not supposed to eat of. And you know what Adam and Eve did? They went over and got on that tree. They did what they wanted.
- What we do. What humans do. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Everybody's doing what they want to do. There is no way to avoid the fact that man sinned and man's sin brought death and destruction.
- [ 9 : 57 ] Now see, this peace on earth and goodwill toward men, it makes no sense. Unless you understand what's going on. I mean, these shepherds are just keeping their sheep.
- They're just out there with their sheep. I mean, honestly, if they'd been like, if they'd have been Americans out there, they'd have said, we don't need peace. We got peace. We don't need goodwill. We got goodwill. Everything's fine.
- My sheep are fine. I'm fine. Everything's fine. But in the scriptures, you got to understand what's happening. God was saying, you guys are going to go to hell and I don't want you to. I don't want you to go to hell.
- The Bible says in Romans 5, 12, wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world. Adam sinned. Sin came in. And that's why we die. Did you know that death is an everyday reminder that men are sinners?
- Every time you hear about a funeral, you ought to remember this. No sin. If sin had not entered the world, death wouldn't be here. Jesus, God, never intended for them to eat of the tree of life, a tree of knowledge of good and evil.
- [ 11 : 02 ] He put the tree of life in the garden and said, y'all can have that one if you want it. But man chose not to do. Sin entered into the world, death by sin, death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.
- And before you go any further, somewhere in your little sweet, beautiful picture of Christmas is you got this jolly elf or this sweet God who loves everybody.

But you need to understand what the Bible says. Look at John 3, 36 with me. You cannot avoid this truth.

The Bible said, he that believes on the Son hath everlasting life. But he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.

If they will not trust Jesus. And what he did on the cross at Calvary, they will not live. Doesn't matter how good they are.

[ 12 : 03 ] Doesn't matter how much you love them. First gets worse. They won't just not see life.

But the very wrath, hot, red, flaming anger of God abides on them. Now maybe we'll get to see what's going on.

So what you're watching in this big story, there's just some innocent little shepherds. You know, they're your kids. And the sheep are your kid dressed like a sheep. And the other kid's a shepherd and everything's so sweet.

But the God of heaven knows this. They're sinners. They're going to go to hell. There's no solution. But I'm a good God. And I promise salvation from the very beginning.

And I'm here to tell the world. It's happening now. I'm coming here now. And I'm establishing what I promised all the way back in Genesis 3.15.

[ 13 : 06 ] Go to Luke 2.14. God is being praised because of his goodness. And rescuing man from the consequences of sin. 2.14. Glory to God in the house.

Wow, God. Wow, God. Wow, God. You are good. Because you're bringing peace on earth. And God, you're showing goodwill towards us.

He could have killed us. He could have sent us to hell. He could have given us no hope.

He said, in the day you eat it, you will die. And death entered and death passed on to all men. And sin entered and all men have sinned. But God said, I love you.

The Bible says in Luke chapter 19 and verse 10, for the son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.

[ 14 : 05 ] But he didn't lose it. He didn't lose it. It walked away. Man was there and God had him right here. And God says, I got this wonderful plan for you.

And man said, I don't care. And walked away into his own ruin and his own destruction. And when he did, God said, I can't let him go.

I'm going to go get him and bring him back. What a God. Glory to God in the highest for a God that would do that. Matthew 20 and 28, when Jesus is laying there in that little manger, the cross and its shadow laid across his cradle.

It says, even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto, God didn't come to earth in a human form so people could serve him. He came to give his life a payment, a ransom for many.

One of you might say, why many? Because most of you might not trust Christ. And many is a whole bunch. But not everybody goes to heaven. Bad news for you.

[ 15 : 16 ] He paid for everybody. Everybody can be saved. But many will choose not to. Did you know that Jesus became sin so that you could be saved?

The Bible says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 21. He hath made him to be sin for us. I sinned. But God's good will said, Austin, you stink.

You've done wrong. You deserve to die. But I'll take it all on me. And I'll be all of that for you. He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

I want you to go to Luke 2.10. The promise was to all men. Not North American Christians. Not Europeans. Not white Anglo-Saxon Europeans.

The Bible says in Luke 10. The angel said unto them, fear not. For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. That shall be to all North American white people. Or for all Baptists that live in the southeast.

[ 16 : 26 ] He said, underline in your Bible, all people. The God of heaven was saying, the human race sinned against me. The human race turned their back on me.

News flash for all of you. The early Jews weren't white. And they weren't from Georgia. I know that's news to you. But he wanted all people.

All people. In Luke 2.14, he said, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill toward men. Towards mankind.

Towards men. Towards women. Towards humankind. What a God. Sinful. Man shakes his fist in the face of God.

And God says, I still got goodwill towards you. And I still love you. In Psalm 67.1 that we just looked at a few days ago. God be merciful unto us and bless us.

[ 17 : 27 ] And cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth. God wanted his way known on earth. All the way back from then. Thy saving health among all nations.

You know this part of the story. But sometimes it kind of gets forgotten. And Jesus is being taken to the temple. And as the days have passed. And it's time for his purification. And he shows up at the temple.

And there's this old man named Simeon. He was a lot older than me. Just so you know. He was an old guy. And in Luke 2.30 it says. That Simeon stands up and says.

Mine eyes have seen thy salvation. When he saw the baby Jesus. He said, wow. It's happening. God has sent Jesus.

The savior of the world. He saw God's salvation. In verse 31 he said. Which you have prepared before the face of. All people. All people.

[ 18 : 27 ] Including the pagans. Luke 2.32. A light to lighten the Gentiles. The pagans. The godless ones. And the glory of thy people Israel.

I need you to understand. This idea of world evangelism. Is not an afterthought that pops up in Matthew 28. It's not an afterthought that pops up in the end of every gospel.

When Jesus was born. The announcement was made. Goodwill toward man. To all people. God wants the announcement to be made. There is a problem.

In this promise. Christmas can soften you too much. It can make you think God's just nice to everybody.

It can make you think everything's going to work out. The bible says in 1st Timothy chapter 4. In verse 10.

[ 19 : 27 ] Because we trust in the living God. Who is the savior of all men. Now look at this. It's right here. He's the savior of all. He died.

So everybody. Could be saved. He didn't hand pick some here. And hand pick some there. And say some of y'all going to hell. He's the savior of all men. But there's a qualification.

And there's your problem. You got. To. Believe. There's a horrible and a wicked doctrine. That travels the world.

Among Christians. It's called universalism. It's like in the end. God's going to fix it all. And everybody's going to be okay. The problem is you can't find that in scripture.

The problem is that's not in the word of God. The problem is that's not what God said. That's what you want to think. Every man must choose. To accept the gift of God.

[ 20 : 27 ] Every man must choose to accept the gift of God. It said he's the savior of all men. Especially those that believe. The problem is you must believe.

And there may be people listening in the room here. Or out in the hallway. Or online. Or somebody else is going to hear this. And you need to know. God loves you. He died for you.

But you cannot go to heaven. If you don't trust Christ as your savior. It is not simply a matter that God loves you. And everything's going to be okay. You must receive the gift.

The Bible says the wages of sin is death. But the gift of God is eternal life. Here's another problem.

They don't know. And we've been told to tell them. That's why we decided to take on a missionary this morning. We're commanded to see that all hear about the gift.

[ 21 : 25 ] It is to all men. All should hear. I almost don't want to tell you this.

But here it comes. I think sometimes you don't want to talk to your aunt. And your uncle. And your cousin. And your mother. And your daddy.

Because you somehow think there's a back door to salvation. You can get mad at me. I won't change on this. You will trust Jesus.

They will trust Jesus. Or they'll go to hell. Jesus said to them. I am the way. The truth. And the life.

And then he said. Harsh. Horrible. Words. That we pass over. So flippantly sometimes. Nobody. No man.

[ 22 : 20 ] Comes to the father. But through me. Nobody gets to God. If they don't go through Jesus. Can't go through the church. Can't go through the saints.

Can't go the Buddha road. Can't go the Muslim road. Can't go the atheistic road. Can't be good enough. But here comes two verses.

Matthew 25. 46. I need you to understand. That they won't go to hell for a few weeks. Or a few months.

Or a few years. This isn't Christmas. You're like. Come on man. Lighten up. I got good news. And I'll get back to it.

But you see good news. Isn't good news. Unless you got bad news. To help you understand good news. If I told you. I got a cure for your cancer. You'd be like. I ain't got cancer.

[ 23 : 23 ] Unless you did. Matthew 25. 46. And these shall go away. Into everlasting punishment. Underline that.

Everlasting punishment. But the righteous. Into life eternal. People that know Jesus. Will live. In life.

Forever. People that don't know Jesus. Will live. In death. Forever. People that don't know Jesus. Will be. In everlasting. Punishment.

You need to circle the word. Everlasting. And it needs to weigh. Heavy. On your soul. Your mother. Your daddy.

Your brother. Your sister. Your friend. Your children. This is no. Game. We don't pray for their salvation.

[ 24 : 24 ] I don't know. Somewhere. What if you decided to have a doctrine. That says it's okay. Doesn't matter. They're going to be all right. You don't believe that. Do you? What if you got. You got a doctrine. That says. I don't need to invite them to church.

Because. If God wants them saved. You'll save. If you don't want them saved. You won't save them. You didn't get out of the Bible. Well. Well. When somebody's laying on their deathbed.

Agonizing. Everybody's praying. But every human you know. That doesn't know Jesus. Is already living in death. In Daniel chapter 12.

In verse 2. Many of them that sleep in the dust. Shall awake. Some to everlasting life. Some to shame. And everlasting content. Let's stop a minute.

So these shepherds. Are sitting out there with their sheep. They're probably not even thinking about hell.

[ 25 : 26 ] They're probably not even thinking about their sin. They're probably not thinking about eternity. They're probably thinking. Was that a fox? Did I hear a bear? What's that noise over there?

They're probably thinking about. His bad breath. Or. Or. There's a rock in my back. I need to move a little bit. They're not thinking about any of this.

But God was thinking about them. And the God of heaven steps out all of a sudden. Out of glory. Right in front of all these shepherds. And. And I think it's probably Jesus himself.

And he said. Hey. Boys. Wake up. Scared them to death. He said. Don't need to be afraid. Just want to announce something to you. I'm here to bring goodwill. I come from heaven with peace.

I come from heaven to tell you. I'm going to die for you. I come from heaven to tell you. I will pay your sin debt.

[ 26 : 26 ] And they and everyone who heard it said. Glory to God in the highest. I was on my way to hell. I had no hope.

I had no way. I had no help. There was nothing I could do. But God. Stepped out and came to me. That's what Christmas is about. Ain't about giving a gift to each other.

I'm not against you giving gifts. I'm going to give gifts. I'm going to get gifts. That's not what I'm talking about here. But the real purpose is. God said. I love you.

That's what's beautiful about it. And the Christmas promise gives us all our purpose. The first purpose is to accept the gift. Accept the gift.

Trust God. Be saved. Know that you're going to go to heaven when you die. You can do that. God sent Jesus to give you salvation.

[ 27 : 25 ] Two. Every believer must be involved in making sure all the world knows the good tidings. Look at Luke 2.10 again.

And the angel said unto them. Fear not. For behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. By the way that shepherds went and talked. We're to go and talk.

You have loved ones that need to know about Jesus. I don't need to know about the Baptist church. I don't need to know about Baptist distinctives. What they need right now is to know this.

Their sin separated them from God. But God loves them. We're to be witnesses. In Acts 1.8 he said you shall be witnesses unto me. Both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

You're going to take this message everywhere. What am I doing to get the message around the world? Have I offered myself? Am I praying that God will send out laborers?

[ 28 : 26 ] Am I giving to send the gospel out to the world? Am I reaching out to people I can reach? Am I involved in training others to grow in grace? Tidings are news.

So good news to all. But is it good news if they never hear it? Or if it gets there too late?

And should anyone really hear the gospel twice? While so many have never heard it once? We must be about sharing the good news.

In our Sunday school class today, we talked a little bit about Christmas around the world because my class has several missionaries in it.

And in China where they do not know about Jesus and they do not celebrate Christmas, they know about Santa Claus.

[ 29 : 27 ] And they put him up and they even made the joke. He stays up all year round. They put him up and leave him up all year round. They know about Santa Claus, think it might be a good marketing technique they can adapt.

Everybody knows or many people know about a myth. We have truth. We must share it.

I want you to know today I love you. I'm not trying to be ugly to you. But we cannot flippantly act like our family is going to be okay if they die without Christ. It'll be something that breaks our heart.

If you're a mom and dad, you'll be praying for your kids. You've got to realize hell is hot and long.

And heaven is real. And the only difference is what they do with Jesus. Father in heaven, I love you. I thank you for the chance to talk to your people this morning. And I pray you would bless everyone.

[ 30 : 29 ] And I pray, God, that those that might have been very uncomfortable with this message this morning and might realize the need to get the gospel of Jesus Christ to our family and friends.

God, help us to share the truth. Help us to be concerned. And God, save those that don't know you. And I'll give you praise and honor and glory.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed. And no one looking around. You know whether or not God's dealt with your heart. Maybe there's some family members you should be praying for. I'd like to ask you to get out of your seat.

Come find a place to pray. And I'd like you to lay the name of your loved ones on the altar. And beg God to save them. There's a God in heaven. We have not because we ask not.

We must believe that they will literally really spend eternity in hell. And we need to pray. We need to beg God. This is Christmas. This is the time when God let the world know God loved everybody.

[ 31 : 29 ] And wants everybody to be saved. Let's pray for our family members. Let's beg God to save them. Let's pray for people that live overseas and have never heard the gospel. There are people living in countries that never hear the gospel.

They never hear about Jesus. They never hear the good news that we have heard every week. We'll hear again this afternoon if Jesus doesn't come back. Maybe you're listening and you've never trusted Christ as your Savior.

He loves you. And he wants you to be saved. He wants to rescue. He's the Savior. He came so your sins would be paid for.

And you'd know for sure you'd go to heaven. And I'd ask you this morning, if you've never been saved, trust Jesus today. Accept him as your Savior. Confess your sin.

And believe on him. Father in heaven, as we beg you to save our family members, we ask you to work. I pray that you would. And I pray you'd help us to not give up on them.

[ 32 : 29 ] To not quit praying until it's too late. And I pray, dear God, that your name would be glorified. You'd give us boldness to share the truth. You'd help your people to give like they've never given before. To go and share like they never have.



To disciple and train. God, do a work in our lives. With every head bowed and every eye closed, you keep praying right where you are. We're in no rush. Whenever you're finished, you can stand and sing with Stephen as he leads us in his song.