

AN ANNOUNCEMENT**Luke 2:8-20**

INTRO: It used to be, back before email and Facebook, when you had a baby on the way, it was kind of secret. You noticed that maybe a young lady had a glow about her and her dresses might be a bit more accommodating for a growing belly. They were called maternity dresses and probably still are. You might conjecture, “Is Kathy looking a little bit like a little Tyson is on the way?” But you didn’t actually ask. And then when the little one arrived the world got out. Maybe a proud dad would hand out cigars, although any Brethren in Christ dad would definitely think twice about cigars, or being proud, for that matter.

When Sheila as born on May 11, 1984 at 11:30 at night, I did what any excited dad would do and waited until morning to let everyone know. No! Wait! I didn’t wait until morning. When I got home from the hospital at about 2 AM the first thing I did was call KD Pizza and ordered a pizza and told them (we were on a first name basis in those days) I had a baby girl. They delivered the pizza and wouldn’t let me pay for it. Then, as I ate pizza I called my parents and Kathy’s mom, and all my siblings and all Kathy’s siblings. I probably called Dale and Margaret too – they were my pastors. And other ABCers, especially my seminary friends like the Keefer’s and the Danielson’s At 2:30 – 3 AM!!!!!!

It was crazy! But I was excited and I wanted to tell the world. WE HAD A BABY!

Now it gets announced on Facebook when a baby is on the way. And then 9 ½ months later when Junior arrives another announcement goes out on Facebook. It’s just so much easier now. I had to wait until I got home to use my wall phone to run up a long distance bill. Now a happy dad can blast it out to the world on social media from his smart phone practically as soon as the little one makes his/her entrance into the world. It’s also easier for the poor brothers and sisters who get a text at 2 AM rather than a ringing phone.

But think about what it would be like to get word of the arrival of a baby from a chorus of angels. A middle of the night phone call just doesn’t measure up to that. And from what I just read, it was a bit terrifying. But when God does an announcement – he does it right. And why shouldn’t he? This was and is the most important birth in all of history. This was the birth of Immanuel – God with us.

But there are some very significant things about the announcements that happened on the night Jesus was born and I want to talk about each of them briefly this morning. The first one I want to talk about was that angel chorus that descended on the shepherd fields outside Bethlehem. And then I want to talk about the announcement the shepherds happily made after they met baby Jesus and his parents.

First, look at exactly who the angels announced. They said, quite literally that this was the birth of a . . .

SAVIOR, MESSIAH, LORD

- Look at the text again: *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.* Luke 2:10-11. Most likely any translation reads like the one I just read, which is the New International Version which has, *a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.* with the kinds of words and grammar that explain what the original left out. The original Greek reads, *“There is born to you this day in the city of David, Savior, Christ, Lord.”* There were no articles. Just three words *Savior, Christ, Lord* but they say it all.
- G. Campbell Morgan points this out. *“Saviour, Someone confronting all the sin of the world with regal authority, based upon redeeming power. Christ, Someone confronting all the chaos of the world, the Messiah, Who will be able to realize the hegemony [which means dominance), the Kingdom of God. Lord, the One Who confronts all eternity and all ages. And He is born! He is born today!”*
- Donald Miller clarifies it a bit more with the words, function, office and dignity.
 - Savior is the function of this Newborn King. He himself later said that he came to . . . *seek and to save the lost.* Luke 19:10.
 - Christ or Messiah (they mean the same) is his office. The meaning of the title as we often point out is God’s *“Anointed One”* And in that office he is to be *“King of God’s people, fulfilling all the rich promised for with God’s people, the Jews had been waiting through all the centuries.”*
 - *“His dignity”* is seen in the title *“Lord”*. Lord is the word used to describe God. In fact, God’s actual name is so sacred that the Jews felt to utter it or write it would kill them, so they used the title

“Lord” to refer to him. The title was given only to God, and so it’s very important to note that the angels were pointing out that this baby in the City of David was God.

- This was no normal birth and no normal birth and the angel’s announcement clarifies it and the announcement expands as the number of angels burst out into a song proclaiming . . .

Glory to God in the Highest Heaven

- Joel has been talking about the glory of God in Sunday School class. The point here in these words is that it is completely a God thing. This will not happen except that God plans it and executes it. This God’s will from eternity as it finally unfolds
- We often sing *To God be the glory, great things He hath done; So loved He the world that He gave us His Son*, because it’s only through the grace of God and the sacrifice of his son Jesus that we can have salvation. There is nothing we can do to earn salvation – Jesus died to make it possible. That’s why the angels were singing Glory to God in the highest heaven.
- And yes – he’s in the highest heaven. He is the only one worthy of such praise. So we can sing the rest of that song I started a bit ago,
*Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the earth hear His voice!
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord,
Let the people rejoice!
O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son,
And give Him the glory, great things He hath done.*
- That’s a birth announcement for sure. And then the angels sing, on earth . . .

Peace to those on whom his favor rests.

- It’s not peace on earth as the Christmas carol suggests, it’s peace on whom his favor rests.
- Now before you get depressed about this announcement, please understand, his favor rests on you. Let me explain.
- This . . . *good news that will cause great joy for all the people.* (v. 10) shows that God’s favor is resting on humanity and that’s why he’s sending his Son to save us. Salvation is available for all who call on his name. John tells us *Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.* John 1:12. Those who are his children have the . . . *peace that passes all understanding.* Philippians 4:17.
- In a crazy world, the fact that we can have peace is just what we need to hear. That’s worth passing it on.
- The shepherds went from terrified to curious to excited in no time at all. They looked at each other and said, LET’S GO CHECK THIS OUT!
- And they did. And they were amazed at what they saw when they found Mary and Joseph and the baby. And they were amazed that they were the first to get the announcement. And then they just had to tell people. That’s where we can get in on this. Like the shepherds, we can . . .

Spread the word!

- Our text says, *When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.* Luke 2:17-18. Like me on that Saturday morning in 1984, they couldn’t keep it to themselves. They had to tell everyone!
- That’s what you do with Good News. You spread the word. *Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere, that Jesus Christ is born.*
- It’s good news of great joy. For the shepherds and the people the wakened in the middle of the night with their joyful noise had inherited the despair of centuries without a word from God. Now, here was the best news of all. This was the beginning of a new an eternal plan for all who would call his name.
- Instead of inheriting despair we have inherited very good news. Spread the word. You can do it. Go ahead, make the announcement. Amen.