

**Text:** Luke 2:13 – 14  
**Theme:** Glory to God in the Highest!

- 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,  
14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

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As we begin this evening, I want you to imagine that we are all shepherds. It's a typical night of watching our sheep. The countryside is quiet. Many of our fellow shepherds are sleeping. Maybe every once and a while you hear the howl of a wolf, so you know that at least one of us needs to stay awake to make sure the sheep are safe. Then suddenly, without any warning, the sky turns blinding bright. It's not lightening from a sudden storm, but rather a messenger from the Lord begins to speak to us. Then, just as suddenly, that one angel is joined by a massive choir of angels. The sky is now full of the music of heaven, proclaiming the Good News that the Savior, Jesus Christ, has been born. As we gather together this Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, we will take a closer look at the praise of the angels that night as they sang out, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

Has anyone ever said to you: “I have some good news and I have some bad news to tell you.” If you are anything like me, I generally ask the person to tell me the bad news first. This helps me to enjoy more the good news. Before we hear the Good News this evening, there is a need to hear some very bad news. There is a reason why Jesus Christ had to leave his throne of glory, and be born into this world as a little baby. The reason is inside your heart. The reason is inside my heart. All of us are born into this world as sinful human beings. We are sinners who are born as natural enemies of God. This sin shows that it is alive and well as we daily break the commands of our God. Because of this sinful condition, we deserve only God's holy and righteous anger and wrath. His judgment against sin is a life which never ends in the fire of hell. It is a judgment your sins deserve. It is a judgment my sins deserve.

Are you ready for the Good News now? What the angel said to the shepherds that first Christmas night, he says to all of us here this evening, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.” The ruler of all things, the second person of the Trinity, was chosen to be the sacrifice for all sins. As that baby at Bethlehem grew up, as he lived out his days on this earth, he lived the perfect life we could never hope to live. He suffered. He died. But, the grave could not hold him, and his resurrection is the guarantee that the price for sin is “paid in full”. The resurrection of Jesus is the promise that those who die believing in him as their only Savior, will also conquer death, just as he did Easter morning.

This is why the whole company of angels that first Christmas night could sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” The peace which the Savior brings is not a peace only for this world. It is through Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ alone, that sinful mankind enjoys peace with the one and only true God. It is a peace which had to be won for us. For the Bible is clear that “the sinful mind is hostile to God.” Peace with our heavenly Father is ours to enjoy, not because of anything we have done, but only because of Jesus Christ, and the full and free forgiveness of all sins which he won through his perfect life, and innocent suffering and death.

One question which I have always struggled with at this time of year is “What am I able to say to those who come to church on Christmas, that they don’t know already?” But this is exactly the point. We know the events of the Savior’s birth backwards and forwards. Perhaps we have known about the Savior’s birth from the time we were very little children. We also know the importance of the birth of the Savior. Perhaps most people in our country know about Christmas being the time we celebrate the birth of Jesus. But, there are too many who don’t know the importance of that birth. For many, the birth of Jesus is just another nice story tell at this time of year, with all the other stories which are told. But we know that Christmas is about a gracious Father in heaven giving the gift of a Savior. Now we are to be like the shepherds, whom we are told in Luke 2, “When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.” The shepherds couldn’t wait to share with others the gift they had been told about and had seen with their own eyes. They wanted to share that gift with others. So wherever they walked, whomever they bumped into that night, they shared with them the Good News that the Savior of the world had been born.

At the beginning of my sermon tonight, I encouraged all of us to picture ourselves as shepherds. Now, I would like you to picture yourself as one of the Christmas angels. Just like the angels we, too, are to spread the Word. We are to tell others of the Good News, “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord...Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” Amen.