

# Nativity Service

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Preacher: James Lapping

[ 0 : 0 0 ]      verse 8. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel of the Lord said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God, saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth. Peace to whom, on those to whom his favor rests. When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about. So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in a manger.

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 shepherd had said to them. But Mary treasured up all of these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had seen, which were just as they had been told.

Boys and girls, what a wonderful true story that is that I saw you guys acting there and that Simon read for us. Did you guys enjoy it? Yeah, of course. Well, we now reach the time of the service when we're going to hear God speak to us. But if we're going to hear God speak, then we're going to have to ask him for help. So let's ask him now. P-R-A-Y. Dear God, help us to listen now. Please speak to us as we think about your word. In Jesus' name. Amen. And I wonder if we might look at two verses from our reading this morning. They should come up on the screen. And I'll just read that for us.

But the angel said to them, that's the shepherds in the field that we heard about, 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. He is Messiah, the Lord. And I wonder if you can spot the very first thing that the angel says to the shepherds. Can you spot it? Yes, yes. What do they say? Yes, that's right. Do not be afraid. And I guess on the one hand, he may have said that to them because he was a great big fiery angel with a big sword or something like that.

But on the other hand, he might say, do not be afraid because of the news he brings. And that's really our first point, is do not be afraid. The angel tells him, don't be afraid. And you see, some news can be very scary, can't it? So we've heard some scary news this week about that volcano.

[ 3 : 27 ] That's made lots of us sad, hasn't it? Or when we hear about a big flood, that's scary news. Or when we find out that we failed a math test and we have to tell our parents, that can be very scary news. I know it was for me. But the angel says, don't be afraid because there is nothing ever to be afraid of ever, ever again. Isn't that wonderful? But I wonder if you can spot what kind of news it is that the angel brings. Can you spot? Yes. Yes, I'll bring you good news that will cause great joy. And some news is really okay news. Like finding out I got a C on a test. It's not amazing, but it's helpful. Could be worse. It means you're doing okay. Your teacher will probably say, try a bit harder. And some news is good news. Like finding out, well, I have to go to school, but the good news is there's an amazing school trip on. That's good news. That's going to be lots of fun. But what do we hear? The angel brings good news that is going to cause great joy. And that's our second point there. Good news that brings great joy. And this is going to be the greatest news ever. It's like finding out the night before Christmas that you've got an amazing Christmas present, the best Christmas present that you could ever imagine. Yes, Emily.

Yes, you can feel happy and sad. News makes, does that to us, isn't it? But then when we find out that we've got that amazing Christmas present, that makes us excited, doesn't it? And there we've got our gift.

I wonder if you can guess what's inside. Are you guys excited to find out what's inside the amazing Christmas present? Shall we see? Yes, go and let's unwrap it. May I get a helper to help us unwrap it? Right, come on up. Here we go. There we go. Right. Do you want to take the ribbon off?

Pull the ribbon off. Pull the ribbon off. Oh, well done. Well done. Let's open up. Let's put that down. Let's open up the box. What's inside? What is it? What's that? It's a baby.

Well, I don't know about you. I mean, I know babies being born is quite special, but it does happen quite a bit. So why is this such good, amazing news?

[ 6 : 14 ] Why is this baby so special? And the first thing that we find out is that this baby isn't born in God's Naval Hospital, but it's born in the town of David. That's the place where God's king forever will come from. The king of God's kingdom. And then we notice what the baby's job is, job title is.

It's not doctor. I know we've got lots of doctors here. And it's not truck driver. And it's not builder. But this baby's job title is a savior. And not just any savior. A messiah. And that's really a fancy word that means God's promised once and forever savior. And this salvation that the savior brings, that Jesus brings, is the biggest and the best salvation that we could ever have. It's the best news we could ever receive. Because we know that God made us. And he made everything that we see.

And he loves us. He made us from the smallest ant to the biggest elephant. From the most beautiful sunset to all the stars that we see at night. From our friends to our families that give us and all those lovely hugs that we get from our parents. And because God is good, God has made all the good things that we enjoy in life. But there is a problem. And that is, we say no to our good God who made us everything that we see. We say we don't want to listen to God. We don't want to be God's friend.

That's what the Bible calls sin. And that's when we say, shove off God. I'm in charge. No to your rules. But the problem is not just that we say no to God. Shove off God. But that we say no to the good God who made everything that we see. Now, we don't want to be part of God's good kingdom. And because of that, God says we can't be part of the good things that he has made. His good kingdom. And because God is so amazingly good that even the scary fiery angels hide their face away from God. And because we say, shove off God, I'm in charge. No to your rules. We have a big, big problem. God won't let us into his good kingdom. And we should be very, very afraid. And this makes God very, very sad that the people he loves the most can't be part of his good kingdom. But the good news and great joy that we read about is that God has sent the Savior who has come to make us good so that we can be with God in his good kingdom. And that's really our third point here, is that the angels announce a Savior who makes us good. Hopefully they'll stay there. There we go. Right. There we go. That the angels announce a Savior who makes us good. And that's the very best news we could ever hear of, that God has made a sense of

Savior who makes us good and who brings us into his wonderfully good kingdom. That's good news that will cause great joy at Christmas. The angels seem to think so, and the shepherds. Do you hear they went away rejoicing? I wonder, what about you guys? Do you guys think that's great good news? And because it's such good news, it means that there's nothing to be afraid of because of the Savior. It means that we've got good news of great joy that we can share with our friends at Christmas and all year round.

[ 10 : 20 ] And it means that God has sent a Savior, Jesus, who makes us good. Aren't those some good things to thank God for at this time? Shall we do that? Shall we thank God? Yes. Right. Let's close our eyes and pray.

B-R-A-Y. Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus. Thank you for this good news that will cause great joy.

Thank you for the Savior who makes us good. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.