

Learning from the Shepherds

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[0 : 0 0] tell them that Jesus was born. Now we saw what happened, didn't we? That the shepherds saw an angel and then a whole group of angels, and then they went to Bethlehem to see what had happened.

But then do you know what they did next after they'd gone to Bethlehem? I'm going to read it for us. We had it in our Bible reading, and it's going to be on the screen. Let me tell you what happened next. When they had seen Jesus, 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.

So there's something really important here about how God spreads the news about Jesus, and it's so important. I'm going to put it on the screen. The first thing is the shepherds get an angel, and then everyone else just gets a shepherd. Did you see that? The shepherds get an angel, but everyone else just gets a shepherd. And that tells us two really important things for us today about those shepherds, that we learn from those shepherds. And that it's that we hear well, and that we go tell. So first of all, that we hear well. Can we all say that together?

Hear well. It was easy for those first shepherds, wasn't it? Because they were always going to hear well. They saw an angel in the sky, and if any of us saw an angel, we'd certainly listen up. But do you remember Amos that we saw? Amos had missed the angel, and so he had to think, am I going to trust these shepherds and listen to them? He didn't believe at first, did he? And he's just like everyone else who the shepherds told about what they'd seen. The shepherds get an angel, everyone else just gets a shepherd. And we today need to hear well. We need to trust what we're hearing about Jesus from the shepherds and from Luke and the other people who wrote the Bible. Or maybe you've heard about Jesus from a different kind of shepherd. Maybe it's your mum or your dad, or a relative or a friend who has told you about Jesus. They're not an angel. They're a bit more like a shepherd. But will we trust them because of what those people first saw? You see, some people have first met God through a vision, through hearing a voice, through seeing an angel. It happens today. But for most of the rest of us, we get the Bible. We get a book about God. And we can trust it because the people who wrote it had God appear to them. Now, it's easy to think less of it because it's just a book. It's just the Bible.

But instead, we need to hear well. I don't know whether you've seen the news this week about five pound notes. I don't know whether you ever have five pound notes, but there's some special five pound notes going out this week. There are five of them where a special engraver has put a tiny little picture on them of a writer called Jane Austen. It's only on five of them. And they're saying that if you find one, it's probably worth 50,000 pounds. And the man who made them went to Granny Jean's Bakery in Kelso in the Borders on Monday last week and spent one of the fivers. And the staff even saw him, but they didn't check the fivers. And they gave it out as change. So someone else has got it now and no one knows who. And ever since then, people have been going to Granny Jean's Bakery buying a pie with a 10 pound note. So they get a fiver change to check. But the man who owns Granny Jean's Bakery has said, it's long gone. You see, they didn't check, even though they thought maybe there's something special, they didn't check. And the owner says, if I'd got that note and sold it for 50,000 pounds, I'd have had a very good Christmas. I'm sure he would. Now the thing is that lots of us do that with the real Christmas message. It's worth a lot more to us than 50,000 pounds. The angel says it's news of great joy. It's the best news that you could ever hear.

[4 : 02] God loves you so much. He sent a savior so that you can be forgiven and be friends with God. Now the shepherds heard that and they went looking for him. And the question is, are we willing to look for him this Christmas as well? And if you're not sure who Jesus is, you can look at him tonight at our carol service. And in the new year, when we do Life Explored together from the 15th of January, we're going to do that course together on Sunday evenings to come along, ask your questions and see whether Jesus really does offer what the shepherds thought. But once you already know about him, the thing to do is to hear well this Christmas. And Mary is our example of that. Let me tell you what Mary did when she met the shepherds. Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. And for us, maybe you today, maybe you already believe in Jesus, but what we have to do is we have to ponder what Jesus did in our hearts. We have to, it's like we've got a little fire in our hearts. And if we don't feed it, we don't look after the fire to nurture it, it goes cold. And instead, we need to read the Bible. We need to spend time thinking about Jesus, praying about what

Jesus has done so that we get that fire aglow in our hearts again this Christmas. Hear well. The second thing we have to do is go tell. For the same reason that the shepherds got an angel, everyone else just gets a shepherd. And today in Glasgow, we're the shepherds, guys. We're the ones who are to go and tell. For most of the people you see around you, if you don't tell them about Jesus, nobody will. The cavalry is not coming. We're the shepherds. And I'm so grateful that somebody was a shepherd for me. And when I was 18, 19 years old, talked to me about how important Jesus was so that he was like a shepherd to me and I could look at Jesus and realize his special gift. So who could you be a shepherd for this week? Who could you tell about Jesus and that he's the real meaning of Christmas? Now, I'm going to pray for us now before we're going to have a song from our children to help us. And the way that we pray in our family is we pray in three different ways. I'm going to have to do this with a microphone. The first thing we do when we're praying as a family is we do a wow prayer. And to do a wow prayer, you put your hands in the air like this. Okay, wow. Okay. After we've done a wow prayer, we put our hands on our front, our hands in, and then we put our hands out to say please to God. Okay. So could we all do that together as we pray about those shepherds? So hands in the air.

Wow. God, your angel was right. Jesus is our saviour and he's your promised king. Wow. Okay, now let's put our hands in on our fronts and we say, Father God, please help me to hear well like Mary, to treasure up the truth about Jesus in my heart this Christmas so that I can have joy in what you have done for me.

Amen. And now let's put our hands out as though we're going to get something from God. Father God, please help us to go tell like the shepherds, to share the wonderful news about Jesus this Christmas so that other people can know Jesus as their saviour and king and be friends with you. Amen.

Brilliant. Well, thanks guys for listening so well. We're now going to have our song from our kids on, which is just going to help all of us to think more about that first Christmas. Matthew's going to go up to the piano to help. And I don't know if people who are involved in kids on would like to come forward and maybe some of the taller ones can stand here and then other people can.

[7 : 47] Thank you.