



UNSPEAKABLE JOY

Week 3 | The Joy of Jesus's Birth

| KEY THOUGHTS

- It's common for people to feel as if they're on the outside looking in.
 - This is deeper than simply not getting the invitation; we can be in the midst of a crowd but still feel alone.
 - We can't fully solve the situation without identifying the true problem: we're outside of our true purpose.
- **The true purpose of every human being is to be in a relationship with God.**
 - We were designed to know, to love, and to rely on Him;
 - Otherwise, we're on the outside.
- **Jesus came into our world as an outsider;** His arrival was overlooked, unnoticed by almost everyone.
- **Jesus came into the world for outsiders.**
- His birth was first announced to shepherds, who were in that culture much despised.
 - They got to be the first to see Jesus, to know of His arrival;
 - The announcement was not made to the religious elite, to the king or politicians, to the wealthy or anyone else who thought they were okay and didn't need a Savior.
- **Only through Jesus are outsiders welcomed in;** those who are normally excluded are made insiders.
- **Everyone who meets Jesus is filled with joy.**
- **The first thing the shepherds did was tell everyone else, inviting them in as well.** That's the first response of being included, the natural response to the joy.
- In the Christmas story, we're the shepherds—lowly, overlooked, on the outside.
 - **We're on the outside of a relationship with God because of our sin.**
 - Sin can best be defined as living as if there were no God, with no regard for Him.
- What does sin have to do with Christmas? Everything! Sin, and the separation from God that results from it, is the reason Jesus came!

| SCRIPTURE

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

¹⁵ When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:1-20 (ESV)

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

Isaiah 59:2 (NLT)

| PRACTICAL

- We can learn from the shepherds in the Christmas story. Following their example, we can...
 - **Believe.** They believed what the angels told them; we can believe the gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ.
 - **Look.** Having believed what the angels told them, they went to see Jesus for themselves; we can likewise see Him for ourselves through reading the Bible—in particular, we can continue reading the book of Luke, which is one of the best ways to see Jesus.
 - **Enjoy.** They rejoiced at being brought inside of God’s story; we can allow Him to transform our lives.
 - **Invite.** They told everyone they met about what they’d just seen and heard; we, too, can tell others this good news and invite them to be insiders with us through believing in Him.

| REFLECT

- Jesus was God in human flesh, and because He was in human flesh, He identified us in every way:
 - He faced everything we face; He felt everything we feel; He experienced everything we experience.
 - The only difference is that He never sinned; He lived every moment in complete dependence on and obedience to God.
- Jesus's perfect sinlessness made Him the only solution to our separation from God:
 - He stood in our place and took the punishment for our sin;
 - He faced the wrath of God on our behalf.
- At the moment of Jesus's death, when God turned His face away, Jesus fully knew for the first time what it was to be an outsider, outside of a relationship with the Father.
- It wasn't enough for Him to be born, to live a perfect life, and to die. It was because He then rose from the dead that we can be empowered to rise with Him to eternal life in His kingdom.
- Only through Jesus are the outsiders welcomed in.

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