

Unpacking the Preach

Date: 12th December 2021
Sermon Title: Shepherds searching for the Shepherd
Bible Passage: Luke 2:8-20 (Psalm 23, Ezekiel 34, Micah 5:2,4-5)

Introduction

Take time to read the passage from a few different translations.

- What stands out to you in this passage?
- How would you summarise the main idea?
- Who are the main characters in this story?

Recapping the Preach

Stu began by talking about a restlessness that the Advent season brings about. He concluded that this is because people are searching for 'something' and that Someone is God (Ecclesiastes 3:11). He then introduced the shepherds as ordinary men who are visited by the angel who shares with them 'good news of great joy'.

- In what ways do you go about sharing good news?
- Discuss as a group how you would go about announcing news of international importance?
- Read Luke 2:8. Why do you think God made such an important announcement to a bunch of ordinary shepherds? What does this say about God's priorities?
- Why do you think the news is described as 'good news of great joy'?
- Read Luke 1:11-20. What are the similarities between the announcement to Zechariah and that of the shepherds (there are five)?
- Why do you think the heavenly host burst into song in 2:14?

Stu went on to reference other passages from the Old Testament that the shepherds may have been aware of, which speak of God shepherding His people.

- Read Psalm 23. It begins with the words, 'The Lord is my shepherd' - what things does the Lord do for us as a shepherd described in the Psalm.
- Read Ezekiel 34:1-10. Who are the shepherds of Israel (vs.2)? What are they rebuked for not doing? Why do you think they didn't fulfil their role as Israel's shepherds?
- What are the similarities between John 10:1-21 and the above passages?
- Read Revelation 1:13-18. What is the difference between this picture of Jesus and that of John 10 where he describes himself as the Good Shepherd?
- Jesus went from a throne in heaven to a manger in a stable. What does this say about His character and love for us? (Compare Philippians 2:5-11)

Stu drew out three points from the story that apply to our lives and our priorities, purpose and pursuits as a church: 1) God calls us to be a part of His story and purpose 2) the shepherds worshipped in response to what God was doing 3) they couldn't help but share the good news.

- What do you think of the idea that God has enrolled us to be a part of His cause?
- How can you share the 'good news of great joy' with people on your frontline this week?
- In what ways can you show your gratitude to God for the good news of Jesus this Christmas?

Response

- Is there anything from the preach and passage that you will be taking away to reflect on or work on?
- How can you live out the example of the shepherds on your frontline this week?

Prayer pointers

- Take time to share prayer requests and pray for one another.
- Pray for boldness to share the good news wherever God has placed you.
- Spend time giving thanks to God for the gift of His Son Jesus.

Additional resources:

If you need some additional resources the below websites are useful:

- <https://www.gotquestions.org>
- <https://enduringword.com>
- <https://www.biblica.com>
- <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/>