



Writing Life Faith



The First Advent-ure: The Shepherds

Unlikely Candidates.

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the LORD appeared among them, and the radiance of the LORD's glory surrounded them." (Luke 2:8-9)

Imagine you're at work one day, minding your own business, when out of nowhere an angel appears. We've already seen how Zechariah, Mary, and Joseph responded when an angel visited them.

You turn to your friends, like, "You guys seeing this?" Then the sky explodes with light as an entire host of angels joins in (when Scripture calls them the 'Armies of Heaven', does that refer to God's entire arsenal?). I can't imagine what I would be thinking. Probably something along the lines of, "Is God coming back to Earth?"

In a way, I'd be right.

Who were the shepherds?

After Jesus' birth, the first people who heard about Him were a group of shepherds. We don't know their names, their tribe, their backstory, anything. Before the wise men arrive, before Herod hears about Jesus, God sends a notification to a group of nameless shepherds.

God chooses the lowly, the unappreciated, and the nameless *first*. God's initial pick wasn't the Magi, it wasn't the Pharisees or the Levites...it was shepherds. If shepherds can come confidently before God, that gives me the hope to know that I can come before God.

What do the shepherds teach us about God?

The shepherds weren't chosen because they were righteous or rich. God chose them to make a point: His Kingdom is for those whom society calls "lowly". After hearing the angel's message about the Messiah, the shepherds rushed off to see Jesus.

After visiting Him, the very next thing they do is run throughout the town, telling everyone what has happened. We frequently picture the Disciples as the first missionaries, but if we look to the beginning, the shepherds should receive that honour.

And to make this story even better, isn't it poetic that the first King of Israel was a shepherd, and that the first people to see the final King of Israel were shepherds? When God chose the shepherd David, He asked Samuel to anoint him even though another king was in authority (Saul). When God chose the shepherds, He asked them to share that, even though another king was in authority (Herod), the King had arrived.

Takeaways from the shepherds.

God acted intentionally by choosing to reveal His Son's birth to the shepherds. So what was it about them that caught His eye?

1. Do your job.

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep." (Luke 2:8)

Throughout the Bible, we see God appear to the everyday person doing nothing more than the job they've been given. As menial as their task was, the shepherds were glorifying God by working. I'll say it again: the shepherds weren't on missions, they weren't ruling the country, they weren't doing anything aside from the job God gave them.

If you want your first step towards being like the shepherds, it's an easy one: whatever "work" God has called you to do, do it. And do it with excellence.

2. Come and see.

"When the angels had returned to Heaven, the shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the LORD has told us about.'" (Luke 2:15)

It would've been anti-climactic if the angels had appeared to the shepherds, only for them to stay at their jobs and do nothing. So, to build on the first point: do your job, but follow God's call. Whatever He asks you to do, do it. Open your eyes to the truth. Don't allow yourself to get so preoccupied that you miss the voice of God. Ordinary work is good, but be sure you keep your eyes and ears open for His voice. Then obey, and you might just see something incredible.

3. Tell the world.

"After seeing Him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child." (Luke 2:17)

Now we come to the third step in having a shepherd mindset. First, do your job. Second, obey God's call. Third, live out your faith. When you know the truth, you can't keep it to yourself. It'd be a shame if the shepherds had seen the face of Jesus and done nothing about it. It would be equally sad if we, who have God's Spirit within us, did nothing about it. So tell the world!

In Summary.

The shepherds were the first human beings outside of Mary and Joseph to see Jesus. From an earthly vantage point, there was nothing about them that would have caught God's eye. He chose the least of us, because what matters to God isn't what matters to humans. He wants us to live with a shepherd mindset: do your job, listen for His voice, and tell the world. Will you do it?

Because He uses unexpected people for His glory.

As Luke 2:13-14 says, *"Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others - the armies of Heaven - praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in highest Heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.'"*



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