

Advent Week Three

Day 18, Wednesday, December 15th

"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 said to them, "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 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."

Luke 2:8-12

Imagine for a moment being one of those shepherds. You are going about your job, looking after the sheep, enjoying a quiet night in the country. But, you know the people in the nearby town don't really respect you. The reputations of other shepherds haven't really helped yours. People think you are smelly, a likely thief, a bit odd and not deserving of much respect. Then in the stillness of the night, out of the blue, an amazing power surrounds you. God's glory is in your midst.

How would you feel? Would you be terrified like the shepherds or comforted?

When I look back on my life and think about times when I have been in the presence of powerful people with authority, I have been like those shepherds. Terrified that I might be in trouble. Terrified that I might mess things up. Terrified that I might be criticised. And as a minister, I meet people who feel the same way about God. They worry that God will criticize, condemn and even punish them.

But God has a different message for us, just like he had for the shepherds. -->

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contd.

God's angel says: "Don't be afraid, I bring you good news that will bring great joy for all the people" This good news is that God uses power and authority not to condemn or terrify people, but to give us Jesus, who gives us the real gift of Christmas, the gift of a loving life with God forever.

So being in God's presence leads to joy not fear, when we truly hear from God.

REFLECT: As you go through your day today, take notice of the glimpses of God that you can share with everyone you know.

PRAYER: Almighty God, thank you for using your power and glory to give us the good news of Christmas, may everyone know you by your good news. Amen.

