

Visions and Revelations:
Message 5 - The Shepherds in the Field

After hearing and considering the word that was spoken, a group of brothers and sisters were inspired by some of the verses that were shared. We felt that it was helpful to reconsider these verses again to dig deeper into the burden of the message and to discover how rich it could be to us. We compiled these verses into six sections, one for each day of the week until the next message, in hopes that many other saints could spend a bit of time every day to reconsider the burden of our brother in a new light. If anyone considers some of these verses or questions and feels enriched by them, we ask you to please leave a comment on the Church in Cleveland site under the message to share your thoughts! Thanks! Grace and peace be to all the saints!

Note: These six sections are not comprehensive of the content of the message! This is just designed to be a help to get into a portion throughout the days.

DAY 1

Luke 2:7

And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luke 9:58

And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

As Mary and Joseph approached Bethlehem, Mary may have had the feeling, "If I give birth to the Holy One, the Son of the Most High, there's got to be something prepared by God ready there, for His own sake!" But the Bible says she delivered the baby, wrapped Him, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Actually, this shows that our Savior, God Himself, did not have a grand or noble entrance into this world but was born on the roadside. He wasn't even born in the manger, but was wrapped and placed there after Mary and Joseph found no place at an inn for them. More than that, Jesus was not only born on the roadside, but He lived His entire life on the roadside. Jesus said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." Our Lord did not have any place to lay his head. Not one place. The roadside means, "I am not settled." When considering our own life, sometimes we may unconsciously elevate our standard of living, comfort, and even what we consider to be needs to be more than what our Lord went through. This doesn't mean you can't have a house, but psychologically, do you have the decision: "I am on the roadside." Throughout the Bible we see a similar pattern with Abraham who lived in tents and waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb 11:9-10). In the New Testament we see Paul, who could boldly declare "for me to live is Christ!" (Phil 1:21).

Our Lord lived a life with no home on this earth but rather chose to follow the Father's will and was solely for God's interest! In the same manner, brothers and sisters, we should be sober and consider, am I a person who is solely for God's interests or do I have possessions, a career, a family life, or a house that prevents me from following him completely. If the Lord were to call us today, would we be able to answer his call?

DAY 2

Luke 2:4-5, 7

Joseph also went up...to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem...to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

And she brought forth her firstborn Son...and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Isaiah 1:3

The ox knows its owner

And the donkey its master's crib;

But Israel does not know,

My people do not consider.

The Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which means "house of food." Similar to how a warehouse of food is stocked full with nourishment and things to eat, so also is our Lord overflowing with riches to supply our every need. But how many times have you driven to a warehouse and had dinner there? The warehouse may be bursting with food, but we need an appropriate place to eat that food.

That's why, in Luke 2, we see the Lord Jesus in a manger. A manger is where even the lowest creature can come and eat. In Isaiah 1:3, God declares how His people have less understanding than even oxen and donkeys! How low we fallen humans truly are! Although we were those who selfishly did not care, the Lord still gave Himself to us and we can still enjoy Him bit by bit, day by day. It is amazing how, even through the manner of His birth, the Lord is giving Himself to us and beckoning for us to come to Him, to come into His presence and enjoy all of His riches for our satisfaction.

Have you enjoyed your Lord "in a manger" today? Have you partaken of His riches in such a simple and sweet way? If so, can you become "a manger" to someone else? We are not meant to be people who focus solely on right versus wrong, but instead we are people who can supply life and dispense Christ to others. May we enjoy the Lord and His supply until He overflows in us!

DAY 3

Luke 2:8

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night

Matthew 5:8

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Philippians 3:10

that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,

It's amazing that the first unveiling in the New Testament of Jesus as the Messiah (Christ) was to a group of shepherds. The vision was not to the scribes and Pharisees well-versed in the Scriptures nor was it to the priests serving in the temple, but this vision of the Christ was revealed to a small group of shepherds who had a flock, who were out in the wilderness, and who were keeping watch over their flock at night. These shepherds were faithfully tending their flock even in the nighttime. They were faithful to what they had been committed with. And because of that pure and simple faith, God showed them such a glorious vision.

If we desire for God to show us a vision like this, the key is not more Biblical knowledge or more service according to the Law. The key is to be simple and faithful like these shepherds were. Instead of finding a way to escape the night or the wilderness, can we instead say "Lord, You had a hard life, I will have a hard life too. You went through death, and I fellowship with the sufferings of Christ. At any time, I'm ready to go with You, even though it's during the night, even though the place may be to me as the wilderness."

If the Lord is leading you, take some quiet time and bring this sober matter before Him. The verses above may help. The Lord is the one who is purifying and changing our hearts. Is He touching something within you? May the Lord have mercy on us, that we may be faithful ones willing to know Him and the fellowship of His sufferings, and see Christ more and more.

DAY 4

Luke 2:7, 12

*And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and **wrapped Him in swaddling cloths**, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn....And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe **wrapped in swaddling cloths**, lying in a manger."*

Matthew 9:16

No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Matthew 22:11-12

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless.

1 Corinthians 1:30

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—

It is interesting that this detail is repeated in the Bible. Aren't all babies wrapped in swaddling cloths? Then why would the Bible mention it not once, but even twice? What could the meaning be?

Consider the words of Jesus. He said no one sews new cloth onto an old garment, because then you'll ruin the whole thing. The new cloth typifies what the Lord was coming for; He was coming to produce something new. No longer the old garment, but a new cloth, which would become a new garment. In Matthew 22, the man without this new garment is thrown out of the feast of the New Jerusalem. What is this new garment? It is Christ becoming our righteousness, Christ becoming our salvation, Christ having a reality within our being. From the moment you were saved, you were wrapped with a cloth that will eventually become a new garment! We're covered with the new garment, a new garment dispensing a new element into us, causing our being to be a new person. The old things have passed away! We don't have to rely on our old traditions, our old habits, or our old experiences for we have a Christ within us making everything totally new!

DAY 5

Luke 2:7

*7 And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and **laid** Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn*

Luke 2:12

*12 And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, **lying** in a manger.”*

There is a certain distinction seen in these two verses: laid versus lying. After Jesus was born, Mary laid Him in a manger and when the shepherds came along, they saw Him just lying there. This picture portrays our relationship with the Lord and how we are under His

government. In our lives we have little control over where God “lays” us. We have faith that wherever the Lord puts us, we will be able to serve Him and live a life according to His will. Once we have this realization that where we are today is where God “laid” us, then we can peacefully “lie” there. We can be content and comfortable wherever the Lord has placed us, trusting in His sovereignty. To understand this is a true blessing to your Christian life.

Examine your life today and where God has placed you. Are you dissatisfied with where you are? Are you uncertain about your current situation? The city you’re in? Are you uneasy concerning what the future holds? We all need to have faith that this is where God wants us today, and hopefully when we look back at this time, we can understand a little more of His will for us.

DAY 6

Luke 2:11

For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

“Christ” means “Messiah”. “Christ” means “The Anointed One”. He is the One anointed to carry out God’s economy according to God’s desire, because He is one with God. How does he do it? He’s a Savior. To the shepherds, the word “Messiah” they would have known, but the word “Savior” could have been quite a unique word. Today, it is easy for you to say, “Jesus, you are my Savior.” But do you truly understand what He saves you from? He saves you from sin, saves you from self, saves you from your interests, saves you from your own living. He saves you from everything that is not according to God’s desire. You might not think you need saving from your own interests, but you do! A Savior is not just for saving you from a bad problem, from a bad day, or from a bad relationship. Jesus saves us as Christ the Lord, as the One anointed to fulfill God’s purpose. He saves us so that we can be for God’s purpose! Does our daily life reflect this saving? How can the Lord turn us from our interests to His interests today?