

Advent 3 The Shepherds 1414

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<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. Luke 2:8-20

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And this precious, lifesaving, message is given to shepherds – ordinary shepherds – to tell the world.

Each year we dress our kids up in tea towels so they can pretend to be these gentle shepherds looking after white fluffy sheep.

Hidden deep down in this myth is the fact that the shepherds were ruddy and tough – on the lower end of the social scale – but more so God’s message to the world – a Savior is born, is entrusted to them.

God chose these men, to see the angels of heaven and to tell the world: ***Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord...***

Immediately and faithfully, they went to see.

They heard the angel’s message – they believed - they went to see –they told others about it.

Hear – believe – tell – the mission of every Christian.

It says the townies were “amazed” but they didn’t seem to do anything.

The shepherds told the townies exactly what the angels told them – and they said “wow amazing” and kept on doing whatever they were doing.

There seems to be a world of difference between how the shepherds heard and responded and how the locals heard and responded.

Would you respond better to an angel’s message or to a shepherd’s message?

How well do you listen and communicate?

**I know for sure that Ilona never hears a thing that I think.**

The shepherds told the locals the greatest news on earth but there was not a lot of action.

Except for Mary – it says “but Mary” *as if she was an exception – no one did anything but Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart.*”

Pondering, and absorbing, treasuring what the ordinary shepherds said.

Isn’t that a great picture – Ordinary Mary carefully pondering and storing **treasure** inside her heart where no one can take it away.

And Mary is ordinary – she wrote a song just to say how small, and humble, and insignificant she is.

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Our judgment of people can mean we don’t hear God’s word – you’ve heard it said **“what good can come out of Nazareth – I’m not listening to him”**.

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God uses us to bring the power of salvation to people from all walks of life.

But it will come from a shepherd, a mechanic, a bloke like Chrisso – you don't have to be trained – but you do have to open your mouth.

To keep your mouth closed - is not much short of spiritual abuse to the one you're with.

You know these days we can be reported for talking to kids without the right certificate, or setting the altar for Communion without a safe place accreditation, or making apricot jam without saying on the label it may contain apricots.

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And what's more, it's too obvious, God wants ordinary people to hear his word from ordinary people.

You know God's upside-down world – peasants are prophets, the least are great, the first are last.

Mary's song is all about God's upside-down world: *The proud will be brought low, and the humble will be lifted up; the hungry will be fed, and the rich will go without*

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Advent 3 The Shepherds 1414

<sup>8</sup> And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, **“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”** <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord... <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.”

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them.... and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

<sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. Luke 2:8-20

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Today there’s one message – our saviour is born.

And this precious, lifesaving, message is given to shepherds – ordinary shepherds – to tell the world.

Each year we dress our kids up in tea towels so they can pretend to be these gentle shepherds looking after white fluffy sheep.

Hidden deep down in this myth is the fact that the shepherds were ruddy and tough – on the lower end of the social scale – but more so God’s message to the world – a Savior is born, is entrusted to them.

God chose these men, to see the angels of heaven and to tell the world: **Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord...**

Immediately and faithfully, they went to see.

They heard the angel’s message – they believed - they went to see –they told others about it.

Hear – believe – tell – the mission of every Christian.

It says the townies were “amazed” but they didn’t seem to do anything.

The shepherds told the townies exactly what the angels told them – and they said “wow amazing” and kept on doing whatever they were doing.

There seems to be a world of difference between how the shepherds heard and responded and how the locals heard and responded.

Would you respond better to an angel’s message or to a shepherd’s message?

How well do you listen and communicate?

**I know for sure that Ilona never hears a thing that I think.**

The shepherds told the locals the greatest news on earth but there was not a lot of action.

Except for Mary – it says “but Mary” *as if she was an exception – no one did anything but Mary treasured these things and pondered them in her heart.*”

Pondering, and absorbing, treasuring what the ordinary shepherds said.

Isn’t that a great picture – Ordinary Mary carefully pondering and storing **treasure** inside her heart where no one can take it away.

And Mary is ordinary – she wrote a song just to say how small, and humble, and insignificant she is.

God chose her to become the mother of our Lord Jesus.

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At the end of the day we have to ask is God’s word more powerful from an angel or from a shepherd –

[Type text]



Mary heard it from a shepherd.

Maybe the better question is, do we give more credit to angels or ordinary shepherds?

Once a lady went to Luther and complained about her pastor.

*“Dr Luther my pastor is nothing but a pig”.*

Luther said, *“Well lady receive the word of God from a pig”.*

I’ll give you the tip – the most meaningful words from God you’ll ever hear will come from a shepherd, or a mum, or a neighbour, or a simple pastor, a child, a friend.

Go through the scriptures as much as you like and you’ll find that God’s word is always given to ordinary people, the least likely people: adulterers, murderers, tax collectors, fishermen, and sewers and dealers in purple cloth – ordinary people.

We must be ready to hear – God’s word, is God’s word, is God’s word – no matter who speaks it.

Our judgment of people can mean we don’t hear God’s word – you’ve heard it said **“what good can come out of Nazareth – I’m not listening to him”**.

I read Steve Mc Queens book *“The Salvation of an American Icon”* great book (Greg Laurie).

Steve McQueen the ultimate hedonistic, self-centred movie star, with a love for fast motorbikes, fast cars, fast airplanes, and fast women – not necessarily in that order.

One time he decided to buy this huge mansion - with ocean views, and 2 swimming pools. But he was too proud to ask how much it cost – he just bought it and then realised he didn’t have enough money to pay for it – he was broke for a few months until he did *“the Great Escape”* movie - all of a sudden he had 12 million dollars in the bank.

And he collected cars and motor-bikes, then he began collecting aeroplanes. Soon Steve employed a fulltime mechanic come flying instructor – who unbeknown to him was a Christian.

This mechanic would witness to Steve in the most subtle quite ways you would hardly know it.

It was just a few words at the right time.

One day Steve went home from the hanger told his wife and family they were going to church and they remained Christians for life.

In the book that the mechanic said he didn’t even know what he said but it *“saved”* Steve McQueen.

Steve heard God’s word from an ordinary Christian Mechanic.

God’s word, is God’s word, is God’s word.

Would you listen to a shepherd, or a mechanic?

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I have mate in Albury called *“Chopper”* he’s a member of the Diggers Motor Cycle Club – When we were at Mount Barker he came and stayed at my shed for a few nights – so I invited some of the Longriders around to meet him and have a BBQ.

A few weeks later he rang me up and said he handed in his colours – his diggers patch.

This is huge in Motorcycle culture.

It’s like cutting off your right arm.

Of course, I asked him why he did it and he said it was *“something one of the Longriders said”*. *“It was something Chrisso said”*.

He told me he wanted to get back to God and his church – and hopefully, one day, wear a Longriders patch.

When I got off the phone I got straight onto Chrisso to asked what he said to Chopper.

You know what Chrisso said?

He said, *“I don’t what I said”*.

The point of this is that the God uses ordinary people and their ordinary words to do extraordinary things.

[Type text]

God uses us to bring the power of salvation to people from all walks of life.

But it will come from a shepherd, a mechanic, a bloke like Chrisso – you don't have to be trained – but you do have to open your mouth.

To keep your mouth closed - is not much short of spiritual abuse to the one you're with.

You know these days we can be reported for talking to kids without the right certificate, or setting the altar for Communion without a safe place accreditation, or making apricot jam without saying on the label it may contain apricots.

Maybe one day we'll get reported for not opening our mouths – to share God's word.

Maybe that will be on the last day.

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