



## The Joy of Angels and Shepherds – Luke 2:8-20

**Sunday's Teaching** took us back to the Judean hillsides between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, where a group of usually) fearless shepherds suddenly became un-nerved. Filled with great fear, they wondered "What will happen next?" and "What do we need to do?" In their unique experiences with the angel of the Lord, we found this truth: **God When God causes us to fear, He seeks to prepare us for the joy of a Savior.**

**Let's get STARTED** – warm up with...

We live in an age of anxiousness and anxiety. People are fearful – and rightly so – of many things. Many of our public school kids live with the fear of their school ground become a killing field. They dread the spreading epidemic of family breakup will invade their homes. We struggle with the deep divisions within the American populace. Our great economic prosperity does appear to have the solution to the contingencies we dread.

Take some time to discuss (1) some of the fears felt within your group about life and the future, and (2) how does the joy of trusting in a Savior impact any tendencies to be afraid.

**Let's Explore in the WORD**

Let's do a quick study of what Scripture urges that we DO NOT FEAR...

- **Deuteronomy 20:2-4** When facing battles, what were the Israelites not to fear? How does that translate into our experience? (cf. Deut 31:5-7, Psalm 27:1-3)
- **Psalm 46:1-3** In a physical world that can often be turbulent, about what are we not to fear? What does this look like in practical, everyday living terms?
- **Psalm 118:5-7** In what circumstances do we sometimes encounter this fear? What resources do we have to overcome this fear? (cf. how is this passage used in the N.T.? Heb. 13:5-6. See also Matthew 10:28)
- **Isaiah 8:11-13** Sometimes, we join in with the fears of others. What fears do others (especially those not in God's family) have? Can we avoid being swept into their fears?
- **Matthew 6:25-34** Take some time with Jesus' words here. Do you find yourself anxious with any of the things He mentions? How can our trust in our Savior help us here?
- **1 Peter 3:1-6** Here is a fear that sometimes married women can experience. What is the difficulty here, and what is Peter's encouragement?
- **Revelation 2:20-11** Early believers sometimes paid a price for following Christ. What is the Spirit's encouragement here?

**Let's Prioritize APPLICATION**

Finally, as we celebrate a young couple who, though living in a fearful time, was quietly obedient to God (i.e., Mary and Joseph, Matthew 1:18-2:23, we recognize that they too needed to trust in God for his provision and rescuing. And, Mary birthed to us all a Savior who has promised to give us His peace to replace our fears (John 14:27).

Enjoy your time together at this Christmas season...and trust Him with everything. Merry Christmas! Pastor David