

## What Must We Now Do

In an earlier message, we spoke at length about the choices and the responses that some of these dear ones, Mary, Elizabeth and Zachariah, made when they received special revelation and very special callings from God. We observed how they responded, and we agreed that they each made right choices, especially Mary and Elizabeth.

Today, I would like for us to again consider some of the responses that we see being made here in these scriptures, and then consider the choices that you and I should make to the many opportunities that come to each of us.

Listen again to these words of Luke chapter 2, beginning in verse 6 . . .

<sup>6</sup>So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. <sup>7</sup>And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

<sup>8</sup>Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. <sup>10</sup>Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. <sup>11</sup>For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup>And this *will be* the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

<sup>15</sup>So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup>And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup>Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup>And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were

told them by the shepherds. <sup>19</sup>But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart. <sup>20</sup>Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. (Luke 2:6-20)

A question that should always be present when we encounter something new or when we learn a new piece of information is, “what do I now do with this new information that I have learned?”

Some people are simply receivers of information and knowledge. They receive it, but then they do little or nothing with it.

Others are stimulated by the things they learn, and they quickly go about putting it to use, not always in a wise and prudent way, but regardless, they do act on the newfound thing they have learned.

I believe that it can be said that unless and until a person does respond in some way to the information and knowledge they receive, they will never truly be able to know the real value of it.

As we have been examining these words of scripture over the past few weeks, we have read about strange and wonderful and miraculous things taking place. And we have seen how each person involved has responded to the new-found knowledge and information being brought before their eyes, some of it beyond anything anyone could imagine.

Again, as we have said, beginning in chapter one of this Book of Luke, we see Zachariah being approached by the angel Gabriel telling him about the coming birth of a son, John the Baptist, and we see His response.

We also see the response of his wife Elizabeth as she became pregnant in her old age and then bore a very special and wonderful son, John the Baptist, who would later go out ahead of the Lord Jesus as a herald, declaring His coming.

We also see the angel Gabriel coming to Mary and telling her that although she is a virgin, she will, in a miraculous way, conceive the Baby Jesus, the Savior of all mankind. And then we see Mary's response to all that was taking place.

In the Book of Matthew, we also see the way that Joseph responded as the angel appeared to him in a dream to tell him that his betrothed wife, Mary, would bear Him a Son.

Each person was hearing about strange and new and miraculous things that would take place in their lives and in the lives of their loved ones. And then we see how each of them responded to the new things they had seen and heard.

And now, here in these words of our text this morning, we see even more strange and miraculous things taking place, angels appearing to common shepherds who were tending their flocks. And we see how those shepherds responded to the new-found knowledge that was given to them.

Folks, having the right response to God, as He presents His plans and His purposes to us is important beyond measure. We must never be found guilty of simply seeing or hearing the plans and the truths of God and then doing nothing with them. Because please know that doing nothing is as much of a choice as doing something. And when it involves commands from the Lord, doing nothing is always a wrong choice to make.

Yes, we are “busy” these days, “busier” than any generation that has ever been before us, both husbands and wives having to work in order to afford their living standards, their children involved in every kind of sport and teenage activity, both mothers and fathers running to and fro, having little or no time for real family. And especially having no time left available for some new “calling” that God might put upon their hearts.

But still folks, the truth remains, when an unction comes to our heart that involves the Lord, doing nothing with that unction is always a wrong choice to make.

Now here in these scriptures for today, as we observe these next ones and the strange and wonderful things that are taking place in their lives, we find that they also were making the right responses to God. First the angels that suddenly appeared to each of these people. These angels are servants of the Most High God and they do His every bidding perfectly. They are messengers that fly on the wings of the wind, and often are sent to you and to me to help and to give us aid. Hebrews 1:14 . . .

<sup>14</sup>Are they (the angels) not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)

Aren't these words precious and comforting. All the Elect Angels are devoted servants of the Most High God who are sent to minister to all those of us who will inherit salvation.

Angels came to each of these dear ones here in these scriptures, and they also come to you and me, continually ministering to our needs. We can't see them, except perhaps during those times when we "entertain angels unawares". But folks, we must never doubt, God's angels are all around about us all of the time ministering to us. Should we ask them for their help or give them some other instructions. Probably not! From all that I read in these scriptures, angels only listen to the commands of God. So, our petitions should be made to God and then allow Him to command the angels.

And note also that the angels are messengers, bringing special words to us from God. In the Old Testament, the angels were the ones who ministered the "law" to the Children of Israel. And also, as the Apostle John tells us in the Book of Revelation, the angels in some ways assist the ministers of each church.

And here in our scripture text today, we see that the angels brought messages and instruction to each of these dear ones, Mary, Elizabeth, Zachariah and Joseph.

And then, here in this text, we see the angels bringing their message to the shepherds. And also, we see them doing what must always be done when the plans of God are spoken about, those angels erupted into a chorus of praise to God. Verse 13,

<sup>13</sup>And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!"

As these angels praised God, they gave God glory and praise, but they also brought a very special announcement within that praise. They declared that "peace" and "goodwill" would come to the men and women of the earth.

And those are very meaningful words. Why, because, mankind has been at enmity with God and with each other since the days of Cain and Abel. But this new and holy Son of God would bring peace and goodwill back to the sons of men. This Holy one that the angels spoke about would break down the barriers of sin that separate and divide men from God and divide men from men.

Folks, anger and bitterness, frustration and hatred are so common to our personalities, so common that we often don't even recognize that it is there. It takes only a moment of disagreement for anger to rise to a fever pitch, men hurting and injuring even those that they love most.

These words, “peace” and “goodwill” have deeply important implications for us. In Christ, God has given you and me, and everyone who will receive Him, the ability, the power and the privilege to have peace and goodwill with everyone that we encounter.

Peace is not just a feeling, as some would believe it to be. It is that, yes, but peace is more aptly defined as a complete state of being. The word peace means “to be set at one again.” When we are in Christ, we are “set at one” with God, “at one” with ourselves and “at one” with others. No separation remains.

“Peace” and “goodwill” are blessings beyond our imagination.

. . . Then notice the immediate response that the shepherds had as the angels left to go back into heaven! The shepherds said to one another,

<sup>15</sup> “Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” <sup>16</sup> And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. <sup>17</sup> Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup> And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (Luke 2:15-18)

Here again, we find the word, “haste”. The shepherds came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

And recall again that earlier, it was said that Mary went with great “haste” to see Elizabeth.

As we have emphasized in other of these messages, this matter of “haste” is a very important point of wisdom for you and me. When God gives us a message or an instruction, or a compulsion to go and attend to a matter, we must go immediately, with “great haste”. We must not tarry and question and wonder about the matter for very long. When God gives us an opportunity, it is most often only a one-time opportunity. If we let it pass us by, we will have lost out on it forever.

The shepherds did not hesitate. They hastened to see this thing that God had done.

And note here also, that God did not send His special angelic messengers to the kings of the earth, or even to the priests or other church leaders. God sent His

message to the common working folk of the world like you and me, the shepherds.

And again, this is a very important truth that's being revealed to you and me. It was part of God's new plan. His Word, His message, His truth would be revealed to the common people of this world, working men and women. Yes, there would be an established church, meeting places like this one that we are in today. But the real church would be in the hearts of believers all over the earth. And it would be our calling and responsibility to carry God's message on forward.

That is why Jesus would later say to disciples like you and me that we are to "go ye into all the world and preach His gospel", witnessing and making disciples of all men and women.

And these shepherds did exactly that. After they had learned the "good news", they went about the countryside witnessing to others about the things that they had heard. Verse 17,

<sup>17</sup>Now when they (the shepherds) had seen *Him (the Baby Jesus)*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup>And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (Luke 2:17-18)

All through these words that we have been examining today, we have seen the responses that these dear saints had to the new and miraculous information and knowledge that they received. And the question still remains for you and me, "what will we now do with the same new and miraculous information and knowledge that we have learned from these scriptures?"

God fully expects a response from you and me. No, we will probably not be visited by a heavenly host of angels, but we must respond nonetheless. And my response and yours must be nothing short of the same response that these dear ones had. We must go "with great haste" to learn about this Savior Jesus. And from there, we must faithfully go forth and share the "good news" with anyone and everyone who will listen.

We don't have to be concerned about how others will receive our message. That is between them and God. God will work in their hearts. We have only to be faithful to carry His message to them. Verse 17 again,

<sup>17</sup>Now when they had seen *Him*, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup>And all those who heard *it* marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. (Luke 2:17-18)

Two last thoughts before we close for today.

My dear friends, you and I dare not read and hear the truths of scripture and then simply get up and leave, going back to being the same as we were yesterday. Each time that God speaks to us through His word, we must do something with the things He has said. These truths are His unction to provoke us on to love Him all the more and to conduct the next moments of our lives with the righteousness that He has put within us.

And His truths should provoke our hearts to want to tell others about His wonderful loving care, to respond to His unction no less than these ones that we have been reading about. Verse 20,

<sup>20</sup>Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. (Luke 2:20)

These shepherds had been in the very presence of God, they had heard the “good news” that He was bringing to them, and they were changed by it. And the same is true with you and me after each time that we hear these truths of God.

And that is the answer to the question that I posed at the beginning. You and I are to go back into our families and into our workplaces, “glorifying and praising God for all the things that we have heard and seen”. Simply put, if we don't take our religion back into our homes and families and friendships, and into our workplaces, then it will never be the “good news”, the saving news that God intends it to be.

That is our calling, and we must not fail. Listen again as I close!

<sup>17</sup>Now when they (the shepherds) had seen Him (the Baby Jesus), they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. <sup>18</sup>And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. <sup>20</sup>Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them. (Luke 2:17-20)

