

DEVOTIONAL

Pastor Jeremy
Mattek
Time of Grace

Christmas letdown? Not this year.

"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 2:20)

Whatever you remember as your most extraordinary Christmas celebration, it was likely pretty dull by comparison to the experience of the shepherds. An angel appeared to them, accompanied soon by a great company of his friends, announcing the birth of Jesus to this ordinary group of men to whom very few people in the world paid any attention. They hurried off to Bethlehem and were the very first visitors received by the newborn King.

Amazed and excited about what they saw, they eagerly spread the news of his birth, and then ... "the shepherds returned." Returned to what? To their normal, everyday, ordinary lives. They never again had a Christmas quite like that first one. As far as we know, the angels never came back. Mary and Joseph never came to visit. Every Christmas after that likely seemed pretty ordinary by comparison. Yet, as far as we can tell, there was no post-holiday letdown for these shepherds. Why? Because in every remaining moment of their ordinary lives, they were able to live with extraordinarily good news.

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“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you.” And who was the “you”? It was them. It was their children. It was you. It was your neighbor. No matter our unique colors. No matter our unique histories. No matter our unique regrets. No matter our unique sins. Christmas is the day God announced to the world the one beautiful truth we all have in common: a Savior has been born for you.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, as the year comes to an end and we think about the reality that the holiday season will soon be behind us, we acknowledge that, for some of us, there may be a part of us that grieves. Comfort our hearts, Lord. As you do, remind us that the message of Jesus doesn't stay confined to one season or one time of the year. It travels with us. And this message of grace doesn't just apply to us. It also applies to our neighbor and to those who are different than we are. Remind us of this and of the excellent hope this message carries.

In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.

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