

NEXT STEP: STUDY & SHARE

READINGS

Isaiah 62:6-12

Psalm 97

Light dawns for the righteous, & joy for the honest of heart. (v11)

Titus 3:4-7

Luke 2:8-20

PRAYER OF THE DAY

All-powerful & unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, & empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior & Lord, who lives & reigns with you & the Holy Spirit, one God, now & forever. Amen.

SERMON TEXT- Luke 2:8-20

⁸In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, & the glory of the Lord shone around them, & they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth & lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God & saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven, & on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ¹⁵When the angels had left them & gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem & see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶So they went with haste & found Mary & Joseph, & the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured all these words & pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying & praising God for all they had heard & seen, as it had been told them.

LISTENING TO . . .

GOD- *Christian life is rooted in the Father, Son, & Holy Spirit*

1. What do the following add to the notion of the living presence of the Son of God (v11)?
See Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 12:27; Galatians 3:27; Revelation 21:3
2. What does "to you" & "for you" mean? *See John 3:16-17; Romans 5:8-10, 8:28-39; 1 Corinthians 1:30, 8:6; 2 Corinthians 1:5; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 1:19, 5:2; Titus 2:14; Hebrews 10:12-23; 1 John 4:16*

EACH OTHER- *Sharing & growing with our brothers & sisters in Christ*

3. Think back to a favorite Christmas present you received; what made it exceptional? How can that specialness inspire you in your stewardship- *using God's gifts for God's purposes-* this new year?
See 2 Corinthians 8:1--9:15
4. Shepherds are uncouth, undesirable, & untrustworthy; how can getting in touch with your messy "inner shepherd," so to speak, equip you to share (v20) the good news (v14) with your neighbors & family members? *See Romans 10:10-17, 12:3; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. Note: don't indulge your bad behavior, own up to it & read Proverbs 26:12; Romans 12:3; Galatians 6:3; Philippians 2:3-8*

NEIGHBORS- *Bearing fruit for those not yet our brothers & sisters*

5. God was "born on the road," laid in a makeshift bed & lived on the run (*Matthew 2:13-15*). What insight does this give for "developing fully devoted followers" of Jesus in contemporary times, where we are less rooted to our places than ever?
6. Many folks find great comfort & encouragement that they can attend Christmas & Easter worship (& family events) despite their absence the remainder of the year; Covid19 has disrupted this- even for the "every Sunday" crowd. How can you be a gracious, sharing host & not a guilt tripper? How do the continuing disruptions make you more compassionate & more willing or likely to share the good news (v11)?

Part 2

(Part :1 Messy modern life burdens us from the inside out; Jesus breaks "their yoke of burden.")

*Unwrapping the presents makes a mess, Jesus wraps himself in flesh, in
Word & sacrament, & around us, making us clean*

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is
the Messiah, the Lord. (v11)

-NEXT STEPS MEMORY VERSE-

A holy day has dawned upon us. Come, you nations, & adore the Lord.
For today a great light has come upon the earth. *(from an ancient hymn)*

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