

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 2:1-20

...⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, ...^{5b}with Mary, to whom he was engaged & who was expecting a child. ⁶While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son & wrapped him in bands of cloth, & laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. 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, ^{14a}"Glory to God in the highest heaven, & on earth peace among those whom he favors!" ...^{15b}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. ...^{17b}they made known what had been told them about this child; ¹⁸& 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. *V11* uniquely applies all these titles to Jesus at once (as well as his Davidic ancestry). Consider the First Commandment, *Exodus 20:1-6* (& *Psalm 110:1*, cf. *Matthew 22:41-46*); what do we learn about Jesus, or his natures? See *Zephaniah 3:19-20*; *Zechariah 8:7-13, 10:6*; *Psalm 132:14-18*; *John 1:14*; *Colossians 1:15-19, 2:9*; *1 Timothy 3:16*; *Titus 2:13*; *Small Catechism: Creed II*; available bookofconcord.org
2. What sort of peace (v14) do the angels have in mind? See *Isaiah 26:3*; *Jeremiah 16:5*; *Ezekiel 34:25-31*; *Matthew 10:32-39*; *Luke 12:4-53*; *John 14:27, 20:19-23*; *Romans 1:7, 5:1, 6-11, 15:13, 33, 16:20*; *2 Corinthians 13:11*; *Philippians 4:7-9*; *Hebrews 13:20-21* By the way, what does St. Jerome's insight add that the peace is only for those of "goodwill" (KJV), that is, believers?

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

3. Sketch how you imagine the nativity scene (stick figures are OK; make sure you stick to the Bible story). Which character (not Jesus) do you identify with in the story & how? Add yourself to your picture. Show & tell about your illustration to someone else. This might be a fun & interesting activity for that after-Christmas-dinner "Now what?" time.
4. As we return to everyday life from our Christmas celebrations, how are you grateful for 1) what you got, 2) the good you were permitted to do, & 3) most of all, Jesus?

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

5. Interestingly the people you interact with in everyday life do **not** know the story, let alone the significance, of Jesus' birth. How can you—with graciousness & patience—tell your neighbors at home & work "what has been made known to" you? Note: *21st c. history has no reason to doubt the fact of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, circa 1 AD.* By the way, where would you tell people to find Jesus in your congregation? (v12)
6. Many folks find great comfort & encouragement attending Easter & Christmas worship (& family events) despite their absence the remainder of the year; how can you be a gracious, grateful host & not a guilt tripper?

Grateful Men

What an amazing time they got to have

-Notes-

KEY VERSE: The shepherds returned, glorifying & praising God for all they had heard & seen, as it had been told them. (v20)

-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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