

Christmas Eve – Year B  
Faith Lutheran, Radcliff, KY  
Luke 2:10,11  
Pastor Paul Horn

December 24, 2008

### **A Savior has been born...for you**

**<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.**

As you read the newspaper or watch the news on TV you will hear many stories about people doing nice things for other people. After all, it's the holidays, it's Christmas, the time of goodwill and peace toward each other. Forget about the rest of the year, but at Christmas, let's be nice to each other. Some of these are nice stories and will leave you all warm and fuzzy inside. Other times the stories are too hokey and make you want to gag. But when the story includes you, as the giver or the recipient, you feel appreciated, loved, and it's a humbling experience.

The angels brought something nice for the shepherds outside of Bethlehem. But at first the shepherds weren't quite sure what to make of it all. Luke tells us that an angel appeared, then a great company of the heavenly hosts. These were not the cute, chubby Hallmark cherubs. The Greek words used for company and hosts are military terms. These were warrior angels. We know exactly why Luke informs us that the shepherds were shaking in their sandals.

Think back to your Old Testament Bible history Sunday school stories. Almost every time an angel appeared to a human being, they were scared. It's a natural reaction for a human to have. Humans are not like angels. Humans are not holy, nor spirits, nor have that much power. But the angel reassured the shepherds, “Do not be afraid! We are not here to harm you. We come to announce good news (gospel) that will be great joy for all people. Today, a child has been born in the town of David.” This was a significant detail. 1000 years prior King David was promised that a descendant would be born who would establish his throne forever. Now, the angel announces that promise is fulfilled! 700 years prior the prophet Micah prophesied that the Christ would be born in David's hometown, Bethlehem. Again, the angel proclaims the good news, the Savior is here! He is the Christ – Messiah – Anointed One, the one whom the Lord has chosen to carry out his plan of salvation.

This evening I want to focus on two words, it's actually one in the original language of the Greek and it's plural: for you, a son has been born for you, yes, for you, dirty shepherds. Shepherding was not a noble profession. Shepherds were perpetually ceremonially unclean. They were poor. They sacrificed their lives to protect a flock of sheep while everyone else was tucked warm in their beds. But God chose to send his warrior angels to poor, lowly shepherds and announce to them, a Savior, the Christ, the

one promised of old to save his people from their sins, yes, that Savior, has been born to you, dear shepherds.

It is highly unlikely that a host of warrior angels will appear to us this evening in our little storefront chapel and proclaim good news. And as tough as we might say we are, it would be a frightening experience. A heavenly being does stand among us though. As he promised before he ascended into heaven Jesus is present with us this evening. He also present with us through his Word. Through his Word he speaks to us. In his Word he tells us what he demands of us, what he sees in us and what we deserve.

Christ demands that we be as he is, sinless, holy, free from blame. He tells us how to do that: love your neighbor as yourself. Love your fellow man and woman, all the time, not just as Christmas, all the time. Yes, love even the motorist who suddenly stops on 31W to make a left hand turn, yes, even the neighbor whose dog leaves nice little lawn ornaments on your property, yes, even to that family member you haven't spoken to for years, yes, even that coworker who drives you crazy. He says love them all. More than that, he demands that we love him more. He says to us, "Put me first in your life, not your presents under the tree, not your money, not your time, not even your family, but I come first."

That's what he demands. What he sees is another story. We do not love our spouse, our children, our neighbor or coworkers as much as we love ourselves. We do not always put our God first. What we deserve then is to stand before the whole host of warrior angels and the holy Judge on the Last Day and have him say to us, "Get out of here. I don't want to see you in my heaven. I can't stand to have sinners in my holy presence." We have every reason to shake in the presence of the holy God.

But the angel says to you this evening, "I bring good news. A son is born... for you." Listen to other messengers of God as they tell us why Jesus came for you. Isaiah 9:6 tells us, "**To us** a child is born, **to us** a son is given." In chapter 53:5 the prophet reminds us why he was born for us, "He was pierced **for our** transgressions, he was crushed **for our** iniquities." The punishment that our sins earned for us, for not loving our neighbor as much as we love ourselves, for our sins of not putting God first in our lives, God the Father placed those sins on his Son, for us. In Romans 5:8 the apostle Paul says, "God demonstrates his own love **for us** in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died **for us**." Again in 2Corinthians 5:21 Paul reminds us, "God made him who had no sin to be sin **for us**, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Jesus became our sin, so that we might become righteous, free from blame, holy, sinless in God's sight.

Because of Christmas you and I will no longer be afraid when stand before the host of warrior angels and the holy Judge on the final Day. Good news has come for us. What God demands, Christ fulfilled in his life, death and resurrection. What we deserve, Christ took from us. What we are, Christ gave to us. So that what God sees in us is Christ's life, his death, his resurrection – good news of great joy!

At Christmas time you will hear about people doing good things for other people. Like this guy in Louisville who wants to give \$100,000 to needy children over the holidays. Christmas is not about people doing good things for other people. Christmas is about what Christ did for you. That's why we rush to the manger to see the babe lying in the straw, so meek and mild. We leave rejoicing and praising God like the disciples and quickly hurry to Jerusalem and climb the hill to see him pierced, smitten, stricken, afflicted for us, we run quickly again down the hill to a garden and gaze into an empty tomb and remember why he came.... for me, for you, for all people. Today, a Savior has been born...for you. Amen.

***In His Service,***

***Pastor Paul Horn***

Faith Lutheran Church  
549 N Wilson Rd  
Radcliff, KY 40160  
270-352-4545  
[www.faithinradcliff.org](http://www.faithinradcliff.org)

*"The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" 2Timothy 4:18*