Sermon Follow-up | December 19, 2021

The Season of Advent: The Worship of My Church

4th Sunday in Advent: “Gloria”

Focus Passage: Luke 2:8–20
Larger Context: Luke 1–2
Other Passages Referenced: 1 Peter 2:9–10

Sermon Recap
Luke’s gospel describes the birth of Jesus with a series of unexpected details. Jesus the Messiah was born in a place unexpected by most. The circumstances surrounding His birth resulted from an unexpected event. The first announcement of His birth was given by angels to unexpected witnesses. There were unexpected worshipers. People were filled with unexpected wonder.

The passage from Luke 2 is called “The Gloria” because the root word “glory” appears three times. The word literally means heaviness or weightiness. The Gloria teaches us that Christmas is full of unexpected witnesses (shepherds), unexpected worship (multitude of angels), and unexpected wonder. Today, God calls followers of Jesus to be unexpected witnesses, often in unexpected times, in unexpected places, and in unexpected ways.

Jesus’ life and Kingdom continued to come in unexpected ways. He lived a life different than people expected. He died a death no one expected a Messiah King to die. He unexpectedly rose from the dead. We run the risk of becoming so familiar with the story that we lose our wonder of what God did in the birth of Jesus. We might not have expected it, but God has called us to be witnesses who announce the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. What have we witnessed? Who and how do we worship? Are we filled with wonder?

Interpretive Helps
- In our passage, Luke is trying to help his Gentile readers understand the importance and need of Jesus and he is also trying to allow his Jewish readers to see Jesus as the Messiah-King promised by God in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Allow the Word to Speak — Be Hearers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)
READ Luke 2:1–20
1. What from the passage or sermon was most impactful to you?
2. Were you left with any questions or confusion about the passage or sermon?
3. Where does Luke tell readers Mary and Joseph were from?
4. Where does Luke tell readers Jesus was born? What is the stated reason that Jesus was not born in the town where His parents resided?
5. What is the larger biblical significance of Jesus’ birthplace? (See Micah 5:2 for help)
6. What is significant about the birth of Jesus being announced first to lowly shepherds?

Put the Word into Practice — Be Doers of the Word (About 1/3 of meeting time)
1. In what ways do you see yourself as an unexpected witness like the lowly shepherds?
2. Has the familiarity of the Christmas story taken away from your worship and wonder? If yes, what do you need to recover your worship and wonder of the Messiah who comes in unexpected ways to unexpected places to unexpected people?
3. Do you find yourself in an unexpected place or season in life? Reflect on Luke 2 and the unexpected details of the passage. Ask the LORD for reassurance that He is ruling over the unexpected details of your life just as He was ruling over the unexpected details of Jesus’ first coming.

4. Read and reflect on 1 Peter 2:9–10. Prayerfully consider the calling God has given to you and see how your life is aligning or deviating from that calling.

**The Big Question:** What do you sense God’s Spirit saying to you and what concrete action will you take in response? Share your answer with the group or another trusted Christian and ask them to pray for you.

**SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES:** Click here for some good opportunities.
The “Gloria” teaches us that Christmas is full of unexpected witnessing, worship, and wonder.
“Good news of great joy” (Luke 2:10-11)
- When? “this day” (x11 in Luke)
- Where? Bethlehem
- Who?
“Good news of great joy” … Who?
1. Savior
2. Christ
3. The Lord
“Gloria” (Luke 2:1-20)
I. Unexpected "Where" (2:1-7)
II. Unexpected Witnesses (2:8-12)
III. Unexpected Worship (2:13-14)
  • Glory ("weight," honor, brilliance, majesty)
  • Peace (Hebrew: Shalom)
“Gloria” (Luke 2:1-20)

I. Unexpected "Where" (2:1-7)
II. Unexpected Witnesses (2:8-12)
III. Unexpected Worship (2:13-14)
IV. Unexpected Wonder (2:15-20)
“Thus God first sent the gospel to the lowly ... Consequently these shepherds represent all people of lowly origin and reputation who receive the gospel by God’s grace and proclaim it joyfully to others.”

Tom Constable
But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.
Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

1 Peter 2:9-10
Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Romans 5:1-2
The “Gloria” teaches us that Christmas is full of unexpected witnessing, worship, and wonder.