



# **STORIES OF LIFE!**

**The Gospel of Luke**

**Go Tell His Story!**

**Luke 2:1-20**

**Message #5 of 50 – S777**

**Sermon given on February 4, 2018**



**Sunday Morning Service**

**Pastor Rick Lancaster**

# Go Tell His Story!

*Luke 2:1-20*

## Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 2**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- Today's message in one of the most challenging to teach
- We are in a section of Scripture that is so familiar, that most people regardless how long they have been around the church know it
- Today we look at the Christmas story – the birth of Mary's miraculous, divine baby – Jesus
- And even though this is familiar territory, let's pray and ask God to show us something new
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help us to see it with fresh eyes
- **Pray**

## Teaching

- **Go Tell His Story!**
- Last time, we left off with John, the Baptist being born to the formerly barren Elizabeth
- When it came time to name the child, his father Zacharias, who had been struck mute for pregnancy because of unbelief, insisted his name be John, just as the angel Gabriel told him to
- At that moment, Zacharias' punishment for unbelief was lifted and he was able to speak
- Everybody in 'all the hill country of Judea' knew the story of Zacharias, Elizabeth, and John
- It says that they wondered about what kind of a child John would be
- The answer to their question comes in chapter three
- In the meantime, we turn our attention back to the main character of the gospel of Luke
- **Luke 2:1-2**
- The eighth month of the year is named after this man
- You have probably heard the saying by **Lord Acton - 1887**

**Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men.**

- The Roman emperors were good examples of the truth of that statement
- Caesar Augustus is more of a title than it is a name – Caesar = emperor, Augustus = holy
- He was the first Roman Emperor – 24BC to 14AD
- Caesar Augustus, a man who thought to make himself god was reigning as God the Son Jesus was being born as a man
- He calls for a census, probably for purposes of taxation
- There is an interesting twist to this census
- **Luke 2:3**
- It is hard to say with any certainty how many people were affected by this, but people all over Judea packed their bags and started moving
- Including Joseph and Mary
- **Luke 2:4-5**
- For this census, Joseph and it appears that Mary had to return to the home of their ancestor
- Why was it important that they were in Bethlehem before the Child was born?
- Because about 700 years before this census was commanded **Micah 5:2**

**But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, *though* you are little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth *are* from of old, from everlasting.**

- Jesus, the Messiah, the Savior, the King of kings had to be born in Bethlehem
- I don't want you to miss this – God inspired Micah to write that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem
- God could have told Joseph and Mary to go there
- Both of them had been visited by angels, and believed and obeyed
- Instead God used an ungodly king, a man who thought he could be god to interrupt all the world around this event
- God was at work behind the scene – though most people had no idea
- God is always at work – He is always doing something

- And sometimes, things are going on in the world, or in our lives that seems to be out of our control – forcing us down a path that we didn't choose
- Maybe God is moving you, like He did Joseph and Mary, to where He had always planned for you to be
- Try to imagine this trip for Mary – her due date looming – 70 miles by foot or on the back of a donkey
- This is not what they wanted to be doing right now, but it was what God needed them to be doing
- Don't despise the uncomfortable things that come into your life – it might be God doing a special work in you
- Joseph and Mary may have planned to do what they needed to do in Bethlehem and then head quickly back to Nazareth
- God had another plan
- **Luke 2:6-7**
- We celebrate this event on December 25<sup>th</sup>, though we don't actually know the date Jesus was born
- This is the Incarnation – God becoming flesh **John 1:14**  
**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**
- We need to be careful we don't trivialize this **R. Kent Hughes**  
**The wonder of the Incarnation! The omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient God became a baby!**
- That should fill us with wonder
- The emperor who thought he could be god lived in a palace, while God who became man was born in the humblest of places
- Maybe you have discovered like I did, God doesn't always do things the way I expect Him to
- What comes next is another example of that
- **Luke 2:8-12**
- Bethlehem is overflowing with visitors, there to be registered
- Jerusalem, the capital of Israel is about 5 miles away
- In Jerusalem is the temple, the spiritual headquarters of Israel
- And yet God sends his messenger to a few shepherds 'keeping watch over their flock by night'
- This follows the theme of the birth of Christ

- Joseph and Mary are poor, they come from a nothing town in Galilee, they end up in what is probably a cave where the animals are kept at night, where the conditions are far from sterile or pleasant
- Shepherds were of the lowest class of society – viewed as dirty and dishonest
- This angel, maybe Gabriel, could have appeared in the temple
- But, instead, he shatters the darkness of that cold night with the glory of the Lord
- Don't be afraid – yeah, right! 'I bring you good tidings' – good news
- 'bring good tidings' = one Greek word – we get 'evangelism' from
- Angel says three things about this newborn Baby
- He is the Savior – He was born to rescue them – to save them
- At His birth, the angel says that Jesus came to save us – which He will do by dying on the cross for our sins **1 Corinthians 15:3**

**For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures...**

- He is the Christ = 'anointed one of the Lord' – He was here with a mission – not His, but His Father's
- He is Lord = supernatural master over all = He is God
- Then, the angel gave them a sign to look for, so when they found they found the Baby just as he said, it would confirm everything else he told them
- Then, as if one angel wasn't enough
- **Luke 2:13-14**
- I imagine all of heaven emptied out – every angel wanted to be a part of this moment
- The Incarnation was the greatest thing the Lord had done to this point
- All of heaven is rejoicing that God has stepped down out of heaven to save humanity from its sin
- In the person of Jesus peace was possible with God the Father **John 14:27**

**Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.**

- The shepherds, maybe standing there with eyes as big as baseballs
- And then they were gone
- **Luke 2:15**

- Notice their faith – ‘Let us...go...see this thing that has come to pass...’
- They believed the angel and as an expression of their faith, they went to see
- **Luke 2:16**
- God is so good! Joseph and Mary are in the stinky, dark, messy stable
- It is likely that Joseph delivered the baby
- They believed what the angel had told each of them
- But then they had to make this arduous journey to Bethlehem
- Delivering a baby is not that easy – hard on Mary and stressful for Joseph – more than normal
- It is not hard to imagine them wondering about all of this
- And then suddenly in walks a group of shepherds, into the only place they would be welcome, into the stable
- Imagine as Joseph and Mary listen to their story of the angels
- How their souls must have soared at the testimony of these humble shepherds, in this humble place, to this humble couple, in the presence God in the flesh, the Babe Jesus
- And then they leave, but they don’t go immediately back to their flock
- **Luke 2:17-19**
- Remember, Bethlehem has swollen to overflowing with people from all of Israel because of the census
- The shepherds share their story with anyone who will listen
- These shepherds are the first evangelists of the gospel
- Everyone who heard ‘marveled’ were very amazed – doesn’t say whether they believed or not
- Mary believed and worked to put all the pieces together
- **Luke 2:20**
- These shepherds were changed by what they saw and heard
- These shepherds had a story that was burning inside them
- You have a story too – probably not involving angels and the glory of God shining around you in the darkness
- But you have a story about how Jesus has touched your life, or your marriage, or your family

- As we prepare to close, want to leave you with three things we should keep in mind when telling your story
- Look at verse 17 again
- First thing – **Be excited to tell your story**
- ‘they made widely known’ – they told everyone they could
- For a long time, I was hesitant to share my story – I thought it was boring – no drugs or alcohol, wife loved me, and kids were awesome
- Until it occurred to me that my story may be more miraculous than Jesus saving the drug addicts who come to faith
- I was forty, and my life was good, and I didn’t need Jesus
- Now I’ll tell my story to anyone who will listen
- Whatever your story is, it included God working the miracle of salvation in your heart – be excited to share that
- Second thing – **Share what you know**
- ‘the saying which was told them’
- You don’t need to be a theologian to share your story
- You don’t have to understand the doctrine of soteriology to tell people that Jesus saved you
- Just tell them what you know
- Third thing – **Focus on Jesus**
- ‘concerning this Child’
- Your story should help people to see Jesus
- Your story is not about you – it is about Jesus saving you and living in you
- Keep your story focused on Jesus
- The story of these shepherds caused people to marvel
- Some may have believed, but most probably didn’t
- People don’t need to believe your story, but they do need to hear it
- Be excited about what Jesus has done in your life, tell people about it, and keep the focus on Jesus
- Then trust the Holy Spirit to do His part in their heart
- You have a story about Jesus – tell it!
- Let’s pray!