

# Advent

T H E K I N G ' S C O M I N G

WEEK 3: *Joy*

*Advent Behold. I bring you good news of great joy!*  
- Angel of the Lord

Many of you have likely heard those words in connection with the Christmas story over the years. But what does it really mean to have *Joy*? What if life is hard? How can we have *Joy* in spite of our circumstances? We're going to wrestle through those questions this week as we read through Luke 2 and discover some people who were filled with *Joy* in the midst of a less than ideal situation.

*Read:* Luke 2:6-20

This passage illustrates how our God is a God of surprises, who delights in using the most unlikely of packages to deliver salvation, to display His glory, and to carry His messages. The shepherds God chose to be the first recipients of the message of Jesus' birth were regarded as social outcasts at that time. They lived, and often slept, out in the fields with the animals. They were a far cry from the religious elite of their day. Yet God sent an angel, followed by a shining array of angels, to bring the good news to them first and display His glory...in the middle of the night...telling them about a holy infant who had been born and was lying in an animal's feeding trough.

- What are some of the unlikely surprises in this passage?
- What opposite extremes do you notice?
- What is a time in your own life where the glory of God has shown brightly in one of your darkest periods?

**In v15, we see that the shepherds hear the message the angels brought and immediately leave to go to Bethlehem to see the baby Jesus.**

- What does that tell us about the urgency of the message?

—What should our response be to that same message?

**Contrast the reactions of the shepherds and Mary in v.17-20.**

—Which response resonates more with you? Why?

—Thinking back on the entire passage, what do we learn about who God uses to accomplish His purposes?

**The shepherds' social and economic circumstances had not changed, yet they were filled with *Joy* and gratitude at the good news.**

—What needs to change in you so that you can experience the same?

—What was the result of their contagious *Joy*? Who all was touched by it?

—Who could be touched in your life if you displayed the same kind of *Joy*?

*Prayer:* Lord, you are a God of surprises. Thank you for sending your Son in the darkest of nights, in the most humble of circumstances, and for using outcasts to spread the good news of His arrival. Thank you for loving us and for using us in similar ways, in spite of our circumstances. May we be witnesses to your glory, fill us with your *Joy*, and send us out with the contagious message of your grace to spread the good news to our world today.

***This week, use Psalm 16 as a personal prayer. Read it out loud to God each day as you ask him to fill you with gratitude and *Joy*.***