

# Luke 2:1-20

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm asking if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God in the Gospel of Luke, Luke chapter 2, starting in verse 1 and going down to verse 20.

Again, I'm reading through the New American Standard, so don't let, if it's a little bit different than what you just mentally go back to, don't let that concern you. It says, Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was with child.

While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son, and she wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the end.

In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terribly frightened.

[ 1 : 12 ] The angel said to them, Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people. For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

This will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased.

When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, Let us go straight to Bethlehem then and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as they lay in the manger. And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child.

And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

[ 2 : 13 ] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. And God, we are so thankful for the opportunity we have to read your word. Lord, we pray that the truth of your word now would speak to our hearts and minds.

And Lord, that it would open up for us. Lord, just the glorious truth that it contains. And Lord, by the power and presence of your spirit, that you would help us to understand it. Lord, also help us to live it out for your glory and honor.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. I heard a new song recently. You know, during this time of the year when we hear so much Christmas music, it seems as if it is just the same songs being repeated and sung differently or sung by different artists.

Some of them, I think, are better in their original format than they are in their more modern format. But we don't very often hear new Christmas music. But I heard a new Christmas song.

I think it was just yesterday. A song by Zach Williams. Some of you know Zach Williams. And I can't even really remember the title of it. It was the first time I had heard it. But I love how the song opens.

[ 3 : 14 ] The song opened very quickly with, To ordinary working men, God met them at work and proclaimed the great news to them. And this is exactly what we see here.

When these men were working in the field, that is the shepherds, an angel appeared to them. And we see the herald of the angels here to the shepherds. And we will kind of flesh that out in just a moment.

What I want you to see this morning is that this herald is not one to awaken. It is not one to be assured. This is a herald of confident acceptance. It is a herald of confident acceptance.

The reality and the truth that they were accepted before a holy God. See, we need to understand some things culturally and historically as it applies to this passage.

Culturally, the shepherds were outcast. The shepherds were kind of put out to the side. They were kind of never looked at, never talked to. I mean, they smelled bad. I'm speaking of one who has some sheep at the house.

[ 4 : 12 ] I'm speaking of one who has to wrestle with them just a little bit every now and then. And when I come in, I'm reminded of the fact that shepherds usually stink, right? Sheep don't smell that good. They just don't.

They're not really that intelligent of animals. And they kind of tend to get dirty. And they kind of tend to be in a mess. And it's kind of hard to deal with them every now and then. But what we find, these were dealing with huge flocks of sheep.

And they were dealing with sheep outside of Jerusalem, in between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. And the irony of it is, is that the flocks they were watching would have been the sheep that would have been offered in the temple in Jerusalem.

These would have been the sacrificial lambs, right? So they had a very important role in the worship of the Jewish people. But one of the ironic things is, is that shepherds were never allowed inside the temple.

So when it came to this avenue of public worship, they weren't welcome. And the reason they weren't welcome is because they were deemed unclean. Because by nature, by job description, they dealt with dead animals quite often.

[ 5 : 12 ] And they would deal with very unclean things. As a matter of fact, shepherds were not only not welcome into worship, they were not welcome into the company of a multitude of people. They usually lived in isolation.

And they fell below women on the totem pole, no disrespect, ladies, in their trustworthiness. Which means that a lady could testify in court before a shepherd could.

Because a shepherd's word was never believed. They were looked down upon by all classes of mankind. But yet, these are the individuals that the Lord sent this multitude of heavenly hosts to make this great proclamation to on this night, to the fact that they were accepted.

See, the beauty of the Christmas story is not just that God became flesh and dwelt among us, and we call him Emmanuel. It's that when God became flesh and dwelt among us, he dwelt among all of us, right?

He didn't just dwell among the wealthy or the prominent, and he didn't just dwell among those who were accepted. He dwelt among those who were outcasts. As a matter of fact, the people he welcomed into his presence really astounds me.

[ 6 : 22 ] He used a poor teenage girl named Mary, who was a virgin, to bear him in the womb. He used a simple carpenter named Joseph, who was from a despised city named Nazareth, to be the earthly father of this individual.

His announcement was given to the shepherds as they were at work, and no one else wanted anything to do with them, and invited them to come behold him. And then the wise men, or the Magi from the east, that was probably the wealthiest of that day, also came to him.

So the broad spectrum of individuals who were in his presence really is a reminder of the fact that when he became flesh, and when he dwelt among us, he dwelt among all mankind.

He didn't just choose certain people that he wanted to be around. We see this even in the life of Christ. One of the greatest studies I've personally ever done, and I think we've looked at it here maybe on a Wednesday night before, I don't know if we have.

I just love it. It's called the untouchables, the fact that Jesus touched the untouchables throughout his life. I don't know if you've realized that or not, but Jesus had a habit of touching the untouchables.

[ 7 : 29 ] He would touch the leper. He would touch the lame. He would touch the blind. He would touch the woman with the flow of blood. He would touch the crippled. All these that the righteous and the holy were not supposed to be around, when God became flesh, he touched them.

He laid his hands upon them. He took time for them. And it is just this reminder, this resounding message throughout Scripture that we are accepted in the presence of a holy God.

We see here in this herald of the angels that we have a confident acceptance in his presence. We see it, first of all, that it is a result of the work of God.

Okay, we need to get this out of the way first. The fact that the shepherds were accepted to begin with was because God had already done the work to get them there. It's a result of the work of God. Man does not find his acceptance in what he does. You are not accepted before God because of something you do or because of something you are or because of something you give.

[ 8 : 29 ] Our acceptance is a result of his work. And we need to have this. And we see the work of God from the very beginning of this passage. It says, Now in those days...

You know the Bible is very specific when it talks, right? Now in those days... In what days? In the days in which Mary was with child. In those days, at that time, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

Now all the inhabited earth literally means all of the Roman Empire. Now I'm not sure if we have forgotten this in the American society or not, but the Bible tells us that God holds the heart of the kings in the palm of his hands and has channels of water.

He turns them where he wants, right? So when Caesar Augustus issued a decree, we know that the reason he issued that decree in that day was because God wanted him to issue a decree in that day because there was someone in that empire who needed to be from Nazareth to Bethlehem at that moment.

And we begin seeing God work. And the reason we see this and we need to be amazed at this is because there are these problems. Man sees them as that. God never sees them as that. There are these problems in the Old Testament that tells us that the Messiah would come from Nazareth, but he would also be born in Bethlehem.

[ 9 : 39 ] Now you can't come from two places at one time. I mean, I can't. I'm from Belbo. That's where I'm from, right? You have a place of origin. You can't be from two places at one time in specific locations.

But that is not a problem for God because God can move you from Nazareth to Bethlehem, back to Nazareth so that he can call you out of Egypt. See, I mean, it's amazing what he does here because out of Egypt I called my children.

So he took them from Nazareth to Bethlehem to Egypt and called them back to Nazareth so that he can come out of Nazareth and then around Capernaum. And you say, what does all this mean? It just means God knows what he's doing when he says it in advance.

The impossibilities of Christ really fulfilling every specific prophecy that was ever mentioned of him just reminds us that what we're beholding here is the work of God.

Mary and Joseph live in Nazareth, but God moves the heart of the Caesar to issue a decree so that everybody has to go back to their hometown. If you were here Wednesday night, we looked at the family tree of Emmanuel.

[ 10 : 39 ] We looked at the lineage of Joseph. We looked at the lineage of Mary. And you see that both of them are the descendants of David and the house of David is what? Bethlehem. So they had to go to Bethlehem.

That's not abnormal, by the way, because that's normally how censuses were taken. So we see God moving and God bringing them back. And it happened to be at the right time. I don't know if you are really under this impression, but if you're not, you should be.

There are no such thing as coincidences. There are no such thing as happenstances. There are things as God's workings, right? The things that are happening at a specific time in your life are because God is doing something at that time in your life.

I don't believe in chance. I don't believe in coincidence. I don't believe in luck. I believe in a divine hand who leads and guides and moves all things. I believe he is absolutely 100% in control.

So that while it was at that time, and while she was there, it was time for her to give birth. And the reason I think it was while she was there, because of this very next thing we say, and I also don't think it's, you know, let's just stop right here.

[ 11 : 44 ] And I know I'm kind of speaking in circles, but I want you to see the whole picture, because I think at times we get familiar with the scripture and we miss out on it. Okay, so he brings them to the right place. He brings them to the right city to fulfill the prophecy, Micah 5 too, right?

We see that. So now they're in Bethlehem, because, oh, you little town of Bethlehem, you know, a light shall arise from you. We see that in the book of Micah. But what we see here is now he's in the right place, but Mary is there, and while she is there, it's time for her to give birth.

And she wraps him in cloths, and she laid him in a manger, right? Why? Because there's no room for them in the end. You say, well, there's no room for them in the end. Well, it makes sense. Well, it also makes sense in light of who God's about to welcome into his presence, because the only place the shepherds could have went would have been the stable.

They would have not been allowed to go into a hotel or an inn. They would not have been allowed to go into a house. They would not have been allowed to go in anywhere else. But they can boldly walk with all kinds of confidence into a stable and look at a feeding trough because that's where they belong.

And when we talk about acceptance, we see that God is working all things out so that he can call them to himself. Because in the same region, there were some shepherds.

[ 12 : 59 ] Do you see that? In the same region, there were some shepherds watching over their flock by night. In the very place that God was about to do the miraculous, that is, become flesh, those people were there.

So that God could call them into his presence. I want to tell you something, friend. You know why you're accepted? Because God moves in your life in a way that he draws you near him. He puts you in his region, right?

He puts you in the vicinity of where he's about to work. And when he's working, he calls you to behold that work. And he calls you to be a part of that work. And he calls you and invites you to join him in that work.

The amazing thing is that we are accepted. But what's even more amazing is the reason we're accepted is because God worked it out in such a way that we would be close to him that he can invite us to himself. He moved close to us, not us moving close to him, right?

God didn't call us to heaven. He came to earth. And in your own life, God moved closer to you long before you ever moved closer to him. You need to understand that. It's this thing called wooing, that he began to win you over.

[ 14 : 05 ] He began to woo you. He began to call you to himself. He began to get a little closer to you. He began to move in so that you would take notice of him. He began to open up your eyes so that you could see the evidence of his work.

He began to open up your heart so that you could understand the love and the concern he has for you. The reason that we know we are accepted is because God began working in our lives long before we ever started looking for him.

We were just out in the fields watching over some sheep by night when all of a sudden he was bringing everything to pass so that he could invite us into his presence. I don't know where you're at. I don't know how accepted you are.

You think you are before God, but the beauty of it is that God was working long before you ever realized you were accepted. He was just drawing you near him and he was moving in your direction.

He moved them to Bethlehem because there were some shepherds near there that he wanted to call to himself. So we see that this is a result of the work of God. We see that it also is a result of the proclamation of the word of God.

[ 15 : 03 ] It is not just the work of God. It is the word of God because it says in the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. Verse 9 says, and an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them and the glory of the Lord shone around him and they were terribly frightened.

I love kind of the tie together, the connecting dots here. And I've just got to, this isn't really in the message, but it's something I want you to see. He is the angel of the Lord, right?

The angel of the Lord stood before them. And if you go down a little bit later, later the angel says, who is Christ the Lord? So we see the irony here. He is Christ the Lord and he is the angel of the Lord.

So it is the baby laying in the womb had sent forth one of his own messengers to proclaim to the shepherds, hey, I'm here. Because this angel is actually a servant of the baby laying in the manger. That's what's so cool about the Christmas story. That baby laying in the manger, that angel standing on the mountaintop, that's his servant. He's an angel of the Lord and he is Christ the Lord who is in the manger.

[16:12] And the only thing that angels can state are the word of God, right? The only thing that at least a heavenly angel can state is that which God has told him. They are operating in perfect obedience because the angels which have been disobedient have been cast out of heaven.

That is the fall of the third of the angels with Satan. But we see this, that this angel stands before them and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were terribly frightened, which we would be as well. But the angel said to them, here is the word of God.

And this is the beauty in it. I want you to notice throughout this all the pronouns, right? All of the you's, how the word of God became personal to them. Do not be afraid for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all the people.

For today in the city of David, there has been born for you a savior who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Do you see this? These are shepherds who are outcasts that nobody wants around them. And the angel of the Lord is standing there giving them an invitation. And the invitation is coming by way of the word of God. And it is the word of God being made personal.

[17:18] They're talking to me. This shepherd is saying, he said me, he said you. He was looking at me and said you. This is for you. This is for you. This is for you. And you will go and see.

See, the problem is so many times when you open up the word of God, we read the word of God like it's some abstract truth or some distant thought rather than something that God is saying to us. One of the glorious things of scripture is that when you open up the pages of God's word, it is God speaking to you. And there is a truth there for you.

And it is invitation for you. And when I open up my Bible, it is God speaking to me because this word is, as the word of God tells us, living and active and dividing to the very joints and marrows of each and every heart, right?

This is not God speaking to everybody all at one, it is God speaking to everybody all at one time, but this isn't God speaking to somebody else. This is God speaking to you. When you open up the book of Isaiah and you say Isaiah, who is prophesying before all the kings and he is prophesying before the kings of Judah and all those kings, it is not just God speaking to them.

[18:25] It is also God speaking to you. And when you open up any portion of scripture, it is God speaking to us. The shepherds understood what God was saying. He was saying to them. The shepherds understood that the word of God had direct application to them.

We find our acceptance when we realize that when God's word says something, it means it for us. You know, when the Bible says, whosoever believes shall have everlasting life, it really means that to me.

When the Bible says, if I confess my sins and cry out to him, he will forgive me, it means it to me.

When the Bible says that God gave his only begotten son, it means that he gave him for me.

It means there's direct application to me because here we see the shepherds are hearing this and they're not saying, oh, well, that's a good word for somebody. We know they say it's a good word for them because it says here that as soon as the angels left them, verse 15, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, let us go straight to Bethlehem then and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

Do you know how we know or how it is evident that we have taken the word of God and made it personal? Is when we take the word of God, we hear what God says and we begin to apply it.

[19:40] If the angels had heard this and said, well, that's very good news, that's awesome. Somebody should go check that out. Then they would have never really accepted what God had told them, right?

But because they said, God has made known to us something, let's go see this thing which he has revealed to us. When we read the word of God or we hear the word of God and all of a sudden we begin to apply the word of God, then we have made the word of God personal in our own lives. Not until we have made it personal have we really made it applicable because the word of God just heard or a word of God just read but never applied is really meaningless.

God is speaking to us. How many of you parents, and you understand this and it's really just very basic, there are times when we're having general conversation with our children but if our children never respond to that, it kind of frustrates us but then there are times we're giving clear commands to our children and when our children act as if we didn't say anything, that really frustrates us, right? And I love it. I always thought it was humorous when our kids thought we were giving them suggestions rather than giving them commands. And I always said, you know, if I was giving you a suggestion, I would have asked your opinion but since I'm not asking your opinion, I'm giving you a directive or a command.

[ 20 : 55 ] I want you to do something. The reason I think that's humorous is because that's what I do with God a lot of times. I have a heavenly father who's speaking to me and sometimes I read his word and I think he's giving me a suggestion when really he's giving me a command.

And I love the fact that when God's word speaks, it speaks in a one-way avenue, right? God allows me to pray it back to him but God has never asked my opinion on what he should do. He's always just told me what he is doing and it is now my response. He didn't ask the shepherds, hey guys, you think it's a good idea? No, he told them, here's what I have done. Now you are invited to join in on that.

There's the good news. They began to respond to the word of God. We find assurance based on our response to what God has said to us. So many people think that they cannot go into the presence of the word of God because they cannot take or cannot go into the presence of God. I've met so many people who said, there's no way God will ever accept me. There's no way God will ever accept me. And when you lay out scripture for them or you lay out the word of God, you say, well, that's true. That's good for some people. And the reality is, no, it's good for you.

[ 21 : 59 ] But until they will apply what God says to them, then they never have this thing called acceptance in his presence. We find our acceptance based on what God has told us in his word.

Third, we see that this acceptance, this confident acceptance is united with the witness of man. It is not only the work of God and the word of God, it leads to the witness of man.

Remember, the shepherds were those who could not testify in court, but they could testify everywhere else because it says, and when they had gone away, verse 15, from them into, the shepherds began saying to one another, let us go straight to Bethlehem then and see this thing which has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

Verse 16. So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as he lay in the manger. And when they had seen this, here it is. And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child.

And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. Now, you know, shepherds were probably those who said nobody would ever listen to us. Nobody ever wants to hear our opinion.

[ 23 : 08 ] Nobody ever wants to talk to us. But when you see something this good, you can't help but talk about it, right? Nobody will even listen to us in the court of law, but I cannot be silent about this.

They would have been those, I'm sure the temptation would have been there. Well, I'm just going to keep this to myself. I'm reminded of the account we find in the Old Testament when the lepers went into the camp and found the camp empty and began to plunder the camp.

Remember that? Jerusalem was under siege and the lepers who were the outcasts, nobody wanted anything to do with them because they were unclean and they were outside the city walls and they said, you know what? If we die, we die. Let's go into the camp.

And they found the camp empty and they said, what are we doing? We have this great news and we haven't told anybody about it. Sure, nobody wants to be around us, but we need to at least tell them the good news, right? Because it really doesn't matter what people think of us.

When we know news this good, we have to proclaim it. And here we have the shepherds doing the same thing. The shepherds say, all we know is what we have heard and what we have seen.

[ 24 : 03 ] By the way, that's a recipe for a good testimony, all right? You ever want to give witness to the Lord? Just do this. Just testify to what you have heard and what you have seen. What God's word has told you and how you have seen him live it out in your life.

That's all you have to do. I don't need you to talk about anything else. I don't need you to wax theological. I don't need you to use big words. I don't need you to get very philosophical. All people

want to hear is what God has told you and how you have seen him prove it to you.

That's a great testimony. And that's all the shepherds did. The shepherds said, he told us we would find a baby wrapped in cloths lying in a manger. And man, lo and behold, we went to Bethlehem and we found a baby wrapped in cloths lying in a manger.

And he told us that this is the Savior. This is Jesus who is for all men. And we are accepted in his presence. All they talked about was what God had told them and what God had shown them.

Friend, listen to me. If we walk in faithful obedience to the word of God, God will tell us things and he will show us things. This is the testimony we see in scripture. The apostles say, we cannot help but speak of those things which we have seen and heard.

[ 25 : 09 ] In the book of Acts, all they say, we have seen and heard. Everybody that has a relationship with Christ throughout the New Testament talks of the things they have seen and heard. We don't need to talk.

There are some things I cannot testify to. People ask me questions all the time. People say, well, do you believe in this or do you believe in that? And I can say, well, I have my interpretation of scripture, but I personally have never seen it, but that does not discount it, right?

I'm not sitting here to go into all these things. There are these great deep things in scripture, but I have, you know, heard others who have seen things and I'm not going to argue with their testimonies.

If they love the Lord Jesus Christ and they follow him with all their heart and God shows them things that they can testify about, listen, here are the shepherds talking of what they have heard and what they have seen and when we know things this good, we cannot help but be a witness.

You know, the reality is other people need to find acceptance through our witness. That's the truth. Not every shepherd was in that field that night, but that group of shepherds was in that field that night.

[ 26 : 14 ] Every shepherd would find their acceptance in the witness of these shepherds, which means there are people in your realm of the world who would never accept my witness, but they would accept yours.

And they need to hear your witness. They need to hear your testimony. They need to hear your saying of what you have heard and what you have seen the Lord doing in your life because the witness of man leads to the acceptance of others.

When they begin to realize, God does love me. God does care for me. He will accept me. And we go down to the fourth and final thing. Now, not only do we see this as a result of the work of God, they are in response to the word of God.

We see the witness of man. Fourth and finally, it leads to a sincere worship. All things lead to worship here. It says, and all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

It's amazing, right? These shepherds are telling us things that you cannot understand. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. We'll come back to that probably next week. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart.

[ 27 : 23 ] Verse 20, here it is, the worship. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen just as had been told them. They went back, but they did not go back the same.

They went back to work. They had to go back to the sheepfold, right? They had to go back to the flock. They had to go back to the fields. It was still night, but they didn't go back the same because they went back glorifying and praising God.

Because when they had walked in faithful obedience to the word of God, when they understood with confidence their acceptance before God, it led them to sincerely worship Him.

When we realize how accepted we are in His presence, it will always lead us to worship.

Acceptance always leads to a celebratory worship. It always leads to glorifying and praising God for all that we have heard and all that we have seen.

Because the reality is, is when we know beyond a shadow of a doubt, when we are confident of this fact, that the God of all the universe, the King of kings and Lord of lords, accepts us, then it will always move us to worship.

[ 28 : 30 ] Worship is a natural outflow of acceptance. It is the rejoicing. It is the celebration of the fact that we get to be in His presence. That is not just a baby laying in a manger. That is the King of kings and Lord of lords.

That is the Messiah. That is the promised one. And that one who is laying in the manger is the one who had called these shepherds and nobody else wanted to be around and said, hey, come near me.

I want you to be in my presence. When we realize that Christ calls us into His presence and His presence is in the presence of the Father. And as we have seen in the book of Revelation, we are in that throne room of heaven.

It will always lead us to worship. We know that it will lead us to worship or it should lead us to worship here because when we read in that latter time in the book of Revelation, we will be worshipping there.

When we are in His presence, the one thing we will be doing is worshipping. So if we can have a confident assurance that we are accepted with Him now, then we still should be worshipping.

[ 29 : 27 ] Lack of worship really is a testimony to a lack of acceptance. We don't worship because we're not sure we're supposed to be there. We feel a little bit out of place. When I know I'm at home with the Father and I'm at home with the Savior, it really doesn't matter how out of place I am with you guys because I'm at home and I'm accepted with Him.

He accepts me in all my faults. He accepts me in all my weaknesses. He accepts me in all my shortcomings. He accepts me in all my failures. And I cannot help but worship Him for accepting me like this.

While I was in the field working, He drew near and called me to His presence. And that, my friend, leads me to worship. So may this season be a season that reminds us that when God became flesh and dwelt among us, He dwelt among all of us.

And He has called all of us to understand with confidence that we can be accepted in His presence. And we need to respond to the Word of God and to obey Him completely.

But we have all been called. The Scripture still says, right? Whosoever will. They haven't taken that out the last time I looked. It still says, whosoever will. That means that there are none who are not accepted.

[ 30 : 37 ] There are none who are outcasts. The Bible says that we find our confidence in the fact that we are accepted in His presence. And I'm so thankful that when the angels announced that, they announced it to probably the most unlikely of characters.

Let's pray. Lord, thank You so much for this day. God, I thank You for this season which You have given us. And Lord, we rejoice in the truth that this season points us to. The reality that You chose to come and dwell among men.

And You didn't just dwell among, Lord, the choice of men. Lord, You came to dwell among all men. And that this is good news for all. It's good news for me.

It's good news for everyone else who may hear me. Lord, it's good news no matter where we may find ourselves. That You came to us because we couldn't come to You. And Lord, we thank You for drawing near.

And Lord, may we respond to that in faithful obedience. And may it be for Your glory and Yours alone. We ask it all in Christ's name. Amen. Amen.

[ 32 : 25 ] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.