

Luke 2:1-20

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[0 : 00] Luke chapter 2 verses 1 through 20 is where we're going to be at this morning. This very, very, very familiar set of scripture. Somehow or another my little bit of a cough came back this week.

I was just kind of nagging a little bit. I had broken free from it. So my dear wife encouraged me this morning. She said, you're going to have to take it easy this morning. And my thought was, yeah, right. I'm in Luke chapter 2 starting in verse 1 and going through verse 20.

Which is a set of scripture that most of the time it would probably be more fitting for me to have a young child up here reading that scripture to you because that's how we hear it in our reading sometimes.

It is how we listen to it and we're just kind of trained because of the Christmas plays and even the Charlie Brown Christmas special and all these things that historically we see. We tend to hear it with the child's voice.

But I also love the King James Version, the beauty of that, more than any other version. But I'm going to stay true to the New American Standard because it causes us to slow down and read it a little bit more even if it's a little bit more cumbersome than how we have it programmed into our mind.

[1 : 01] We're looking at a passage of scripture that is so familiar that my family has the tradition of every year at Christmas morning before we do any presents we read Luke chapter 2 verses 1 through 20. And we have a moment of celebrating what happened on that day or what we are rejoicing over.

And we remind ourselves that the greatest miracle of Christmas is not the fact that we wake up in the morning and we get to open presents. But the greatest miracle of Christmas is that God became flesh and dwelt among us and we call his name Emmanuel.

For the last few weeks we've been looking at the miracle of Christmas. And we've looked at the thing that God broke the silence. I'm not yet caught up online with my sermon uploads. I had five. I got up this week.

I've got, well, after this morning there will be six more for Sunday mornings. I'm trying. But I will get those up there as soon as I can. But we looked at the fact that it was miraculous that God broke the silence after 400 years of silence.

And then we began to look at last week how God accomplishes the impossible. The virgin birth. The impossible situations. And the fact that God can accomplish the impossible and quite often does throughout history is a miraculous thing.

[2 : 09] And we've seen not only how these things have historical roots, but they have daily applications that God does break the silence in our life. He does speak to us. And we take it for granted that at any moment we can open up the word of God and we can hear a word from God.

Or we can sit in a service and listen to someone preach the word of God. And God can say something to you that I don't even know he's saying. And he can use my words. And he can use someone else's words.

And that is miraculous that God would speak to us. I mean, think about that just for a moment. That God breaks into the silence of our lives and speaks to us. And he also calls the stars by name and puts them in place every night too.

I mean, that's pretty amazing. I don't know how long it's been since you've looked up at a clear sky at night. But the Bible says that he calls the heavens, the hosts, the stars, and puts them in place. And he calls each one of them by name.

And that God also talks to you. Wow. Right? And then we saw that God accomplishes the impossible. And we saw the benefit that we have from that, that this is the God we serve. Nothing is really impossible.

[3 : 10] What is impossible with man is possible with God. And we've seen that over and over again. This morning, we're going to continue to look at the miracle of Christmas in Luke 2, verses 1 through 20. And we're going to look at one of the greatest truths that we find, the great miracle of that God chooses the unlikely.

That the unlikely are chosen. So if you're physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the Word of God found in Luke 2, starting in verse 1.

It says, It says, It says,
Let's pray.

Lord, we thank you so much for this season, which we are in the middle of. Lord, we thank you for this miraculous time of the year in which we take time to celebrate your coming to us.

[5 : 51] The birth of the Savior. Lord, I pray as we look at passages that are familiar to us. Lord, those which we have heard so often and read so many times. Lord, that they would wash over us afresh.

We would see them with new eyes and new ears. And God, we would be enraptured by the beauty that they contain. Lord, I pray that you would speak to our hearts and minds this morning. And Lord, that it would be true that we hear a word from you for your glory and honor.

We ask it all in Jesus' name. And amen. Amen. You may be seated. Luke chapter 2, verses 1 through 20 is a very, very familiar set of scripture to us.

And it is a very beautiful set of scripture. And I love to see it in the Christmas plays. And I love to see it portrayed in television shows. And I love to see it when we read it around our house.

And I love to see it every time I come across it in my daily Bible reading. But I also love to open it up in the midst of the company of the believers, which are called the church. And I love for us to see this truth, which we have held so long.

[6 : 53] And to see the beauty that it contains. And to be reminded that this is a miraculous event. This is not just a season. Really, this is a miraculous event that changed all of history.

We sang about it this morning. That all of time finds its fulfillment in this event, right? We saw that this is that which time hinges on. We have the before Christ and the after Christ.

And we have the before the incarnation and after incarnation. History tells time based upon this event. And yet Luke sums it up in 20 short verses for us. In just a small portion of his writings.

And it was Luke who desired to go into a detailed account of the events that took place. With the coming and the life and the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We know that without his coming there could be no death.

And we know without his death there could be no resurrection. We know without his resurrection there could be no what? Atonement. There could be no offer for us. But yet we want to take a moment and just pause and consider this miraculous event.

[7 : 53] And everything that it entailed. Not just that God broke the silence. Not that he did the impossible. But now we want to look at those kind of on the outside. The fringes of it. I remember there was one Christmas season many years ago in which I took a nativity scene.

Just one of those plastic nativity scenes. It had the light bulbs in the bottom of them. You know you see them in the yards. And those old school ones. The ones I grew up looking at. And we had it in the front of the church. And I went through each character one by one.

And we took them away until we got to that last Sunday. And there was Jesus in the manger. And so many times we see things that are so familiar that we forget to look around the manger.

We forget to look around and see those that were chosen to take part in this. And in looking around and seeing who all was involved, we are reminded of the fact that we may be the most unlikely people to ever be chosen by a holy God.

But God has the habit of choosing the unlikely. And we see it here in this passage more than any other passage as it pertains to the coming of Christ. And we see a multitude of unlikely individuals.

[9 : 00] We don't really need to focus on Mary and Joseph because we have seen last week that Mary and Joseph were of the right descendants. They were of the right family. They were a part of the right tribe.

They were of the descendants of David. Joseph had the lineage of going back to the political right to the throne. And Joseph was the one who, if you trace throughout the Old Testament, his descendant, he would be a descendant of the one who had the legal right to the throne.

Though God had pronounced a spiritual curse upon Jeconiah, upon the deportation to the Babylonian captivity, that no one from that descendant. But that was David's descendants, which led down to Joseph.

So legally, Joseph had the right. Mary wasn't from the descendants of Jeconiah. She was from one of the other children of David. So she had a spiritual right to the throne.

So with Mary and Joseph, we don't see them as the most unlikely. We actually see God in his omnipotence and in his mercy working things out perfectly with Mary and Joseph.

[9 : 58] I mean, we just do. It's amazing when you see the consistency throughout Scripture. And I know at times I get to talking about all this technical stuff. And some of you may look at me and go, so what? What does that matter?

What does that matter to me? I find encouragement in that because if God is that concerned about the family details and the lineage of these individuals in Scripture, he surely knows what he's doing about every big thing in my life, right?

He knows what he's doing with every instance and every occupation. He knows everything that he's doing, and he is completely in control. But now we don't want to put aside Mary and Joseph, but we stop and we look around the fringes.

And I want you to see how God chose the most unlikely of people to do the greatest event in all of history, which means there's still hope for me, right? And there's still hope for you. In this list of unlikelies, we start really in a place we would never think we would start, and it is in verse 1.

Now in those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus. We start with the emperor and the ruler of Rome, Caesar Augustus. Now in those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree, right?

[11 : 04] Now it was not unheard of for Roman emperors to issue decrees. As a matter of fact, they would issue decrees every so many years so that they would have an idea of how big their empire was and how they could tax people and they could keep this whole Pax Romana under control, and they would make sure even though it was a Pax Romana, which means the peace of Rome, it was anything but a peaceful time, right?

Because they maintained peace at all cause, and all causes in all ways. And it didn't mean that you individually had peace. It just meant that Rome was making sure that you believed what you wanted to believe, and I'll believe what I want to believe, and you can believe what you want to believe.

It should sound familiar, by the way. It's okay. You just don't argue with me, and I won't argue with you, and we'll all be okay, right? But it doesn't mean anyone had peace. But God starts his story with the emperor of Rome, Caesar Augustus.

It says, Now in those days, a decree was issued from Caesar Augustus that a census will be taken of all the inhabited earth. That does not mean that everyone in the world had to go somewhere.

That just means everyone in Rome's empire had to go be registered, okay?

It was all what they considered the inhabited earth was the Roman empire, that everyone had to go. Now this is where we start this wonderful story. I want you to see, first of all and foremost, that God chooses the unlikely, number one, so that his work will be accomplished.

[12 : 27] That his work will be accomplished. We have a problem when we open up our New Testaments. God has the right people at the right time living in the wrong place, it seems.

They are living in Nazareth. Nazareth is literally the city on the wrong side of the tracks. Nobody likes Nazareth. Nobody even likes anyone from Nazareth, which is okay because that was also fulfilled in Old Testament prophecy.

But the Messiah was not to come from Nazareth. The Messiah was to come from where?

Bethlehem. Micah 5, 2, right? We understand this, that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem.

God will use this Old Testament prophecy in the book of Matthew to lead the wise men, or the Magi, to the birthplace of Jesus.

But the problem seems to be that God's people that he's chosen at the right place in the right time are living in the wrong city, and that is Nazareth. And God needs to move Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, a travel of about 75 to 90 miles.

He needs to get them there. Now, it's nothing for us to jump in our vehicle and go 90 miles. It's nothing for us just to do a round trip and to get there. But that is a big voyage at that time. That is a hard travel.

[13 : 41] It is not something that you were just in the habit of doing. You didn't fill up with a tank of gas and jump in the vehicle and go on, and you got a range of 400 miles. You just didn't do that. It really had to be a big event to travel.

So God had to move the people he had at that season to the place they were supposed to be. Now, what surprises me is that God could have moved them in any way he saw fit. I mean, I believe in a God like that, right?

I believe that God could have put a stirring in Joseph's heart, and Joseph could have said, You know what, Mary? I think we need to go live down in Bethlehem. I could have seen that God at any time, at any point, could have moved Mary to say, Joseph, what about Bethlehem?

That seems like a cool place. Since the angel told me this is going to be the descendant of David, Bethlehem is the city of David, and it's also known as the house of bread. That's literally what it means. And since this is to be the bread that comes out of heaven, I mean, she had this angelic visitation, right?

But God doesn't do that. What amazes me is that God didn't even use the religious institution to move his people. He used the political world, and that is Caesar Augustus.

[14:45] The last person I would have ever dreamed that the God of heaven would ever use to move his people to Bethlehem would have been Caesar Augustus.

But God uses Caesar Augustus to issue a decree so that they would have to move to Bethlehem. And this story is so beautiful. Because if Joseph had said, you know what, I think we ought to go live in Bethlehem.

Or if Mary had said, you know what, I think we ought to go live in Bethlehem. Or if a religious decree had led them to Bethlehem, guess what? They would have had plenty of room in Bethlehem to find a house to live.

Only a decree that came from the throne room would move so many people that there would be no room for him in the end. We get this. We'll get to that point later, by the way. And God used the most unlikely person so that his work would be accomplished.

This encourages me. Why? Because it really doesn't matter. Friend, let's just be honest. Caesar Augustus is not a righteous individual throughout history. All right? Caesar Augustus isn't the guy we want to saddle up next to and say that we're going to see him in heaven.

[15:51] Caesar Augustus is one who reigned with force and power and who ascended the throne of Rome. Not really in such a proper way. It's not what we consider righteous. As a matter of fact, people bowed down and worshipped him.

He put himself in the place of God. He saw himself as a God, and yet God overruled him and used him to fulfill his purposes, not what Caesar wanted to do.

This is encouraging to me. Why? Because God is not limited by who he uses. He will use whoever he wants to, whenever he wants to, to do what he wants to. He is not restricted by whoever is in power.

He is not restricted by whoever is in the White House or in the throne room of any kingdom. God will work out his plans as he sees fit because God is in control.

The Bible tells us that he holds the hearts of the kings in his hands and he turns them where he wants to. And you say, well, I wish he would turn this king this way or that king that way. Me too. But I'm not God. Right?

[16:53] And I don't have this thing where I step outside of history and I see everything as it is. I don't see everything that's going on, but he does. And what we find is that really God is not just in control of his story.

Two words. God is ultimately in control of all of his story. One word. Whatever king is there and whatever person is there and why they issued a decree, that is all his realm.

There's nothing outside of his realm because he always will accomplish his work. I mean, if he can use a donkey to do it, if he can use a bush that doesn't burn to do it, if he can use a rooster crowing to do it, if he can do whatever he needs to do, God will always bring about his work.

And that, to me, is good news. Because God has a work that he is doing and he's doing it in our nation. He's doing it around our world. And what we see is we find fear sometimes and we find intimidation that God's purposes will not come about because of this or that or that or whatever is going on in the world and everything going on in society.

My friend, listen to me. God can do the impossible through the most unlikely whenever he wants to. And when he calls us, the unlikely to himself, it is always for this purpose, to accomplish his work.

[18:13] Always for that purpose. So we see here where we start the story with Caesar Augustus issuing a decree. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And Luke puts it in a time and place in history.

And you can go back and you can read the records of that. I'm not going to take you through all that. God does this to show that even these were under his power and under his influence. The most powerful ruler in all of the world at that time had nothing to say unless God moved him to say it.

So we see that God chooses the unlikely that his work may be accomplished. Number two, God chooses the unlikely that his wonder will not be forgotten. That his wonder will not be forgotten. It says here, 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, which was the practice, right? Wrapped him in cloths to keep him warm and to make the blood flow.

That was what they thought at that time. It helped the blood circulation to make sure the limbs were all there. So she did the right motherly thing. She wrapped him in cloths. She laid him in a manger. Because there was no room for them in the end.

[19 : 20] By the way, how impossible is it to forget that fact? How impossible is it to forget the wonder of the fact that the King of kings and Lord of lords and the creator of all things was laid in the lowliest of places?

The wonder of it all. That he's spoken into existence. The Bible tells us that he created all things and all things were created through him.

And what? For him. Everything was created for his glory. And yet the wonder of it all. When he came here because of the way God works and a multitude of people that were there.

Because of the way the Heavenly Father was moving all things. Because of the way he chose to come. The wonder of it all is he was in the most unlikely of places.

And we can't get over that. And we shouldn't get over that. We shouldn't forget that. We see this. That God was making it impossible to forget. If he had been born somewhere down in Bethlehem.

[20 : 24] And there would have been a physical address. I don't know if there was a center street in Bethlehem. There's a center street just about in every town you go to. But maybe he was born in 112 Center Street. In this house.

And there's a room in the back of that house. And all of a sudden now. We would at times say well just like everyone else. You know had a place there. Or maybe it was a hospital. That hospital wouldn't be in existence. And I know it's a sad reality.

That the hospitals that all of our children were born in no longer in existence. Right? You know our children. The place where they were born. And we celebrated their birth. Now we drive by them.

And they're no longer hospitals.

They're just not there anymore. They're in Shelbyville or Murfreesboro. They're just vacant places. Why? Because things change. And things go on. And people forget that there used to be a hospital there. Or people forget this is where they used to do this work there.

Nobody can get over the fact. And the wonder of it all. That the creator of all things came and was laid in a manger. Because it doesn't make sense. And I think that's exactly the point.

[21 : 19] It's the wonder of it all. But God chooses the unlikely. So that his wonder will not be soon forgotten. We see it coming on down. It says 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. Look at this. To us we're like okay yeah that's the way it's supposed to see.

Because we always have these sweet children who are shepherds. And they're the best shepherds ever. And they walk down holding the staff. But understand this. Okay shepherds in this time are considered unclean.

Shepherds could not enter the temple. They could never go into the presence of God. They could not testify in the court of law. They were considered nothing but liars. As a matter of fact if they stood up and testified to a crime.

People would dismiss it. And I don't mean this to belittle anyone. They would accept the testimony of a woman before they accepted the testimony of a shepherd. Which is astounding. They tended the sheep that were offered on the altars in the temple.

[22 : 21] But they could never go to the temple. Because their work ensured that they would forever be unclean. They had no access to the presence of God.

Because at that time the presence of God was limited to a temple. So they thought. But yet the wonder of it all is that while they were in the fields. The glory of God came around them. While they were in the midst of an unclean situation.

Living an unclean life because of their occupation. The glory of God came around them. Now you know why they were afraid. Right? Because we're unclean in the presence of holiness.

And he chose these unlikely people. So that his wonder would not be lost. It's the glory of God filled the temple. So what? It's done that a couple of times throughout history.

It did that when Solomon built his temple. And then it did it again. It did it in the tabernacle. And it did it when Solomon built his temple. The Shekinah glory has fallen on the tabernacle and the temple. And that had been done before. If it had done it in a righteous man's house.

[23 : 20] Okay. Well we had expected there. But for the glory of God to show up in a field with shepherds is just crazy. And it shows us the wonder that God longs for us to have and not to forget.

My friend listen to me. The reason I hold on to my testimony. And the reason I raise Ebenezer's in my life. Which means you know thus far the Lord has helped me. I know I've told you that before. And the reason you don't need to forget who you are. And it's not that we ever want to go back to the past. We don't want to ever go back or use our past as an excuse. But when I look at myself and I see who I was.

And I see who in my heart really I am. Unless God continually rules and lays. And I see I'm not yet what I should be. But I will be. And I'm pressing on towards the goal of the high upper calling. And all these things.

It's Paul. And the reason I remind you is because I don't want to lose or forget the wonder that God chose me. That I'm the most unlikely person to be chosen to be filled with the glory of God.

[24 : 20] Yet he says that if you come to me by faith. Then Jesus said that I will come and make my abode with you. I will live inside of you. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit living inside of the believer.

That's glory, right? And I'm the least likely person to ever think that would happen. I don't want to stand thinking, well yeah. Sure he would.

If I was God, I would choose me. No, I wouldn't. If I was God, I would never choose me. And we can all say that. And that is not meaning, that's not self-degradation. That's not just putting ourselves down.

That's just being honest. But God's wonder and splendor is this. That he chooses us to come around us when we can't come to him. And it's a beautiful thing.

And he does that so that the wonder of God will not be forgotten. Number three, we see that the unlikely are chosen not only so that the work of God will be accomplished, that the wonder of God will not be forgotten. Number three is that the word of God will be proclaimed.

[25 : 15] The shepherds that hear this message. By the way, this is great right here. The first people to ever share the gospel were what? Who? Well, Gabriel went to Mary and said that you will have a child.

He brought her good news. Good news means gospel, right? That is the gospel. Literally, translated, it is good news. So Gabriel announced the gospel to Mary. And then the shepherds announced the good news to all men.

That literally means they proclaimed the gospel. The angels proclaimed the gospel to the shepherds. So the first recipients of the gospel were the Virgin Mary, a young girl, and shepherds in the field.

Right? I mean, that's great. So they heard the gospel. And the shepherds, it says, when the angels left in the glory of God filled around them. And we have all this thing that we're so familiar with that the angels, the multitude of angels were praising God and celebrating this truth.

And they left and they said, let us go to Bethlehem then and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us. Say with that, which the Lord has made known to us. Why is this important? Because they had a revelation of the word of God and they took action upon that revelation.

[26 : 19] God spoke to them and they did something with it. Right? God broke the silence in the shepherd's life and they decided to do something. God said there's a baby laying in a manger, wrapped in cloths, and he is the Savior.

So let's go see it. Which means when God says something to you, he reveals something to you. It is always necessary that we take action upon the revelation of the word of God.

If God says something and we don't do anything, then guess what? It really doesn't matter. But we see here the shepherds hear the word of God, which the Lord has made known to us, and they respond to the word of God.

They go straight to Bethlehem to see this thing which has come to pass. And the Bible says, and they found the baby laying in a manger, wrapped in cloths, just like the Lord told them. And then there's this great statement. It says, so they made known to everyone all that had been told them about this child.

You know who the first people were, the first people to ever proclaim the gospel? Shepherds. You know, the people who couldn't even testify in court.

[27 : 23] The people that were unclean. When they saw this, they said, I don't care if you believe me or not. You have this thought sometimes when you think you need to share Christ with someone or you want to share the gospel.

You say, well, what if they don't believe me? You think that stopped the shepherds? Nobody ever believed them. It doesn't matter if they believe you or not. All that matters is if you believe what you were told and you saw it with your own eyes and you know it in your own heart and you understood it with your own mind.

If it is true, friend, guess what? It is true. It is true even if no one else believes it. It is still true. The truth is always the truth no matter if anyone responds to it or not. This is the only way, the only comfort you can ever have in preaching the truth is if no one else responds, it doesn't matter because it's still true.

Our responsibility is to proclaim the truth. And we see here the shepherds heard a word from God, responded to the word of God, and saw the fulfillment of the word of God. So they began to proclaim the word of God.

Friend, if you take God at his word, he will always prove faithful to his word. And then you will not be able to quit talking about his word. If you read the word of God and God tells you something and you see it right there in black and white and red and you understand that God is leading you to do something, if you will look at me, I'm not to pig over.

[28 : 33] It's okay. It's the first time I've ever not to pig over while preaching, but squirrel. Hey, I told them, they said, do you mind if we put the decorations up there? I said, I don't care, but I can't guarantee I won't, you know, whatever.

It's fine. I just asked one simple thing. Totally. See, I got sidetracked. I said, please don't make anything in my peripherals because I do get distracted. There was one service I preached when I was pastoring at Normandy.

They built an airplane hanger for VBS. And the airplane hanger came all the way out to the edge of the platform. I couldn't hardly preach because I was standing in an airplane hanger and outside of my eyes all I could see was airplane hangers.

I mean, it looked cool from out there, but it was messing with me in here. Now that I'm not to pig over, I'm totally messed up. But anyway, let's jump back, Billy Joe. So we see that the shepherds heard the word of God, responded to the word of God, and began to proclaim the word of God.

And when we see the word of God, we hear God tell us something, and we take him at face value, and we see him faithful to his word. Friend, listen to me. We will always, always, always proclaim that word, regardless if anybody believes us or not.

[29 : 44] And quite often, and this is something that I find astounding, quite often, the reason God seems to choose the most unlikely people is because those people cannot be quiet about what he's told them.

I would have been the least likely person to ever be considered a preacher. The last person I would have ever thought would have been preaching.

Once I knew he was calling me, I can't be quiet about it. We see this throughout history. Charles Spurgeon, probably the least likely person you would have ever thought would ever be a preacher. He came to Christ, walking down the road on a snowy day, went to this church, and there was like 12 people inside this church, and the preacher didn't even show up.

He was snowed in, so some layman stood up and preached the message, which led Spurgeon to Christ. And Spurgeon ends up becoming the prince of preachers and proclaiming the gospel. He could not be quiet about that one encounter where he met the Lord.

Spurgeon had two sons. Everyone would have thought, man, Spurgeon's sons are going to be great preachers. Well, they did a pretty good work in Africa, but one of them did. And not to be dismissed or anything, they did a pretty good work.

[30 : 55] But when Spurgeon died, one of his sons came back to pastor a metropolitan tabernacle, and it never really worked. I'm not saying they weren't faithful. I'm just saying that it seems at times throughout history that the most unlikely person seems to be the one who cannot quit talking.

And that's why when I'm surprised by the fact that God chose me, all it wants me to do is keep talking about the way he chose me and why he chose me and how I can't be quiet about it. So if you're the most unlikely person that you could ever think come to Christ, rejoice, my friend, because God has given you an opportunity to continue talking about the thing which you cannot get over. Don't ever get over your salvation. Don't ever, ever, ever, ever, ever lose the wonder of the fact that he chose you and he called you and he redeemed you and he loves you. He cares for you. And keep telling everybody about it regardless if they believe it or not.

Because you were a shepherd standing unclean in the midst of a field and he showed up in your presence when you weren't looking for him thinking nobody cared for you and all of a sudden you can't help but tell everyone about it.

That is great. I have one more. One more. I'll try not to knock any more animals over. Not only do we see in this list that God chooses the unlikely that his work will be accomplished, that his wonder will not be forgotten, that his word will be proclaimed.

[32 : 06] Here is the fourth and final one. Now it comes to us, why? That our worship may be sincere. That our worship may be sincere. It says here that the shepherds began to tell everyone about everything they had heard.

Verse 18 says, 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. We see Mary doing that over and over again. But look at verse 20.

The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen just as had been told them. Why does God choose the unlikely?

And by the way, if you haven't yet, you should put yourself in the category in the camp of the unlikely. Why? So that our worship would be sincere. I want to tell you something. When the shepherds went back, they were like David before the, you know, before the Ark of the Covenant. They were dancing and rejoicing and they didn't care who was looking. You remember when David did that and he girded his loins and his wife was looking out the window and said, David, you ought to be ashamed. You have burished yourself and your family.

[33 : 11] He said, I don't care. I was in the presence of God. The shepherds, it says when they went back, they were glorifying and praising God. They were worshiping God. Why? Because God came to them, chose them, gave them the good news.

They saw that the good news was true. They understood the reality of it. They were surrounded by the glory of it. They were not lost to the wonder of it. And they could not help but worship him because of it. One thing I have seen in church services and one thing I have seen in conferences and all, are those people who think they should be there, or they have a right to be there, they may sing the songs, but those who realize they have no right to being in the presence of the king, they worship in those songs.

Self-righteousness may lead us to go through the motions and to say all the words, but true unrighteousness, when we understand I don't deserve to be in his presence, that I don't care who sees me, I'll throw my hands in the air.

I'll close my eyes every now and then. I may get a little carried away. I may dance a little bit. I may rejoice a little bit. I had a little worship session in the office before I came out here this morning. I can't help it. Why? Because I got to get my worship on every now and then, and that's just the way it works, right?

A little bit more soul worship in my office than I bring out here, because if I brought out here, it may scare all of us off, but it's okay. Why? I can't help but worship him, because I have no right to be in his presence.

[34 : 29] I am the most unlikely of persons, so why should I offer up the most pathetic worship? When I understand who I am, and I understand who he is, and I understand he's called me to himself, I'll tell you something, my friend, my worship will be sincere.

I don't have the best singing voice. As a matter of fact, I'm probably on the other end of that spectrum, probably one of the worst. I don't, I'm not really good, I don't carry tunes, and I don't, I don't have much rhythm, but man, all I want to know is that he knows it's sincere. He doesn't tell us to worship him beautifully. He doesn't tell us to worship him only if we sing good. He says that we are to worship him in sincerity, and in truth, with a heart, and a mind. When do we do that? When we realize God chooses the unlikely, and I am the unlikely, and I will go my way, worshiping him in sincerity, and truth. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you so much for this day. God, I realize that this story is so familiar to us. We've read, seen, and heard it so many times. [35 : 43] God, I pray that it would continue to wash over us new. Lord, realizing, God, that only in you do we find our worth. May God, because of your love, and your grace, and your mercy, you chose us, the most unlikely people, to be your people, and forever we will praise you for that. So God, whatever it is you need to do in our hearts and minds today, we pray that you would do it for your glory, and yours alone. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. [39 : 48] Amen.