

Jesus: The Greatest Joy Ever Known

Luke 2:8–21

Main Idea: *Because God has revealed Jesus as Savior, Messiah, and Lord, we can trust His Word, worship Christ, and make Him known.*

HEAD — Know What God's Word Says

Read Luke 2:8–14

1. What caused the shepherds to be afraid in verses 8–9?

Luke describes the glory of the Lord surrounding them.

δόξα (*doxa*) — “glory”

The word communicates glory, splendor, and majesty. The shepherds suddenly find themselves confronted by a manifestation of God's glory.

Discuss:

- Why does encountering God's holiness produce fear throughout Scripture?
- What does the angel's immediate statement, “Fear not,” reveal about God's grace?
- How does the gospel address our deepest reason for fearing a holy God?

Read Luke 2:11

2. What three titles does the angel give Jesus? Why does each matter?

Σωτήρ (*Sōtēr*) — Savior

Jesus came to rescue sinners. Our deepest problem is not political, financial, relational, or cultural. Our deepest problem is sin, and therefore our greatest need is a Savior.

Χριστός (*Christos*) — Christ/Messiah

Jesus is God's promised King and the fulfillment of God's promises concerning the Messiah.

Κύριος (*Kyrios*) — Lord

Jesus is Master and Lord. *Kyrios* is also regularly used in the Greek Old Testament for the divine name, giving enormous weight to Luke's identification of this Child as “Christ the Lord.”

Discuss:

- Which of these titles most challenges the way our culture thinks about Jesus?
- Why is it insufficient to see Jesus merely as a teacher or example?
- What changes when we understand Jesus not only as Savior but also as Lord?

Read Luke 2:15–18

3. How did the shepherds respond to God's revelation?

Notice the progression:

They heard → they went → they found → they made known.

ῥῆμα (*rhēma*) — “word,” “saying,” or “thing spoken”

The shepherds went to see what the Lord had made known to them. Their actions were grounded in God's revelation.

ἐγνώρισαν (*egnōrisan*) — “made known”

After seeing Jesus, the shepherds publicly communicated what God had told them about Him.

Discuss:

- What is the difference between hearing God's Word and responding to God's Word?
- Why should Scripture evaluate our spiritual experiences rather than our experiences interpreting Scripture?
- How can we test teaching about Jesus against God's Word?
- Read Acts 17:11 and 1 John 4:1. What do these passages teach about discernment?

Important principle: Testing spiritual teaching is not cynicism. Biblical discernment asks, *“Is what I am hearing consistent with what God has revealed in Scripture, and does it magnify the biblical Jesus?”*

Read John 16:13–14. Jesus says that the Holy Spirit glorifies Him. A genuine work of the Spirit will never contradict God's Word or diminish Jesus Christ.

HEART — Examine Your Response to Jesus

Read Luke 2:18–20: Luke presents several responses to what God has done.

The people marveled.

Mary treasured and pondered.

The shepherds glorified and praised God.

θαυμάζω (*thaumazō*) — “to marvel, wonder, be astonished”

A person can be amazed by Jesus without surrendering to Jesus. Wonder is not necessarily worship.

συνετήρει (*synetērei*) — “treasured, preserved, kept carefully”

Mary carefully held these events in her heart.

συμβάλλουσα (*symballousa*) — “pondering, considering, bringing things together”

Mary was thinking deeply about what God was doing.

Discuss:

- Is there a difference between being interested in Jesus and worshipping Jesus?
- What voices most influence your understanding of Jesus right now?
- Are there beliefs you hold about Jesus primarily because someone taught them to you rather than because you have examined Scripture yourself?
- What would it look like for you to treasure and ponder God's Word this week?

Heart Check: Ask quietly before God: *Do I want the Jesus revealed in Scripture—or do I sometimes want Jesus to conform to what I already believe or desire?*

The goal of studying Scripture isn't merely to prove other people wrong. We bring our own beliefs under the authority of God's Word too.

HANDS — Live What God's Word Says

The shepherds eventually returned to their ordinary lives. They went back to work.

But Luke tells us they returned: “glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.”

δοξάζοντες (*doxazontes*) — “glorifying”

To honor and magnify God.

αἰνοῦντες (*ainountes*) — “praising”

To praise or joyfully celebrate God's greatness.

Their circumstances may have looked ordinary again, but encountering Jesus changed the way they returned to them.

Put the Word Into Practice

Choose at least one action this week:

1. **Search:** Before accepting a spiritual claim, you hear online, in conversation, or even in a sermon, search the Scriptures for yourself.
2. **Seek:** Spend time in God's Word each day specifically asking, "What does this passage reveal about Jesus?"
3. **Share:** Tell one person something God's Word has shown you about Jesus.
4. **Worship:** Take something ordinary—your commute, work, parenting, household responsibilities—and intentionally glorify Christ in how you do it.

Final Group Question: If someone watched the way you live this week, what would your life communicate about who you believe Jesus is?

Closing Truth: The shepherds heard God's revelation and sought Jesus. They found God's Word to be true. They made Christ known. Then they returned to everyday life glorifying and praising God.

We are called to do the same.

1. Know the Jesus revealed in God's Word.
2. Test what you hear.
3. Trust what God has said.
4. Worship Christ.
5. Make Him known.

Because the greatest joy you'll ever know is knowing Jesus.

Closing Prayer: *Father, give us discernment to recognize truth and humility to bring our own beliefs under Your Word. Through Your Spirit, open our eyes to see Jesus clearly. Help us not merely to hear Your Word but to obey it. Send us back into our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities as people who glorify Christ and faithfully make Him known. Amen.*