

The Third Week of Advent – The Shepherds’ Candle

As you light the first candle explain, “The first candle we light is The Prophet’s Candle and it reminds us that the coming of Jesus was foretold hundreds of years before His birth.”

As you light the second candle explain, “The second candle we light is The Bethlehem Candle and it reminds us that Jesus was born in a humble fashion as a servant.”

As you light the third candle explain, “The third candle we light is The Shepherds’ Candle and it reminds us that the birth of Jesus was first announced to the humble shepherds.”

Consider: We should not miss the significance of class of people who received the first announcement of Jesus birth. It was to a lowly group of shepherds out watching their flocks. By this period shepherding had fallen from being the noble vocation of the Old Testament King David to the work of the poorest in the society. The shepherds were the unlikely recipients of the most important announcement in history; in the humble position of the shepherd we are reminded of the truth found throughout scripture that God comes to the humble and contrite. He comes to those without any special merit for His love, so that all may see the free riches of His grace, and the pattern found in the announcement of the birth of Jesus is no exception.

Read the Bible: *And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,*

“Glory to God in the highest,

and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.

But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:8-20 ESV)

Remember: There is nothing about us that makes us deserving to hear the same “good news” that the shepherds heard that night. Because through our sin we had turned our backs on God, we are un-deserving to hear the “good news” that a Savior was born who can reconcile us to God. We will not win God’s attention with our good works and righteousness. We will not win God’s attention with our success or social standing. We will not win God’s attention by making some big sacrifice to a cause we think He would like. The Bible says there is only one offering that matters to God and it is the cry of a heart that has been humbled by the sorrow of it’s own sin seeking the grace that can be found in Jesus our Savior. A Savior has been born and He is Christ the Lord whom we celebrate.

Pray: God we desire to be humble of heart and the type of people that would celebrate the birth of Jesus. We are grateful that you do not show your love to us based on our righteousness or merits as people, but instead freely as a gift of grace. We thank you that you have announced such a wondrous gift to undeserving people like us. Help us to treasure Christ for all that He is to us as Savior and Lord.

Experience the Joy: Each week you can take the opportunity to make your Christmas meaningful by doing something practical to share and experience the joy of Christmas. During this week, the project is called Share The Joy.

There are people in our lives who will never be recognized for the ways that they bring joy and meaning in the everyday events of life. It is even easy for us to become so entrenched in what we are doing and where we are going this holiday season that we pass by community servants, friends, neighbors, and co-workers that make our lives meaningful.

During this upcoming week, take notice of someone outside of your family that brings everyday joy to your life without usually being recognized; a bus driver that goes the extra mile, a mail carrier that delivers smiles, a cashier that overflows with encouragement, a neighbor you can always count on. Write them a Christmas Card and share a moment of genuine encouragement and thanksgiving for them.

Daily Reading: Use the daily readings each week to guide you through scriptures related to Advent and the weekly theme.

Week 3: (Monday – Friday)

Monday - 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Tuesday - Psalm 23

Wednesday - Ezekiel 34:7-13

Thursday - Luke 1:1-25

Friday - Luke 1:26-38