**Song of Peace**

**Luke 2:8-20**

**Side 1: Title**

Good morning! During this Advent season we’ve been taking a close look at the original Songs of Christmas. These biblical poems have much to say to us even now about Christmas and we want to discover what that message is. Being that these songs are poetry, we’re learning how to approach them with openness. We’re trying to feel the feelings that the poem is conveying as opposed to trying to come away with information only. We have heard a song from Isaiah and last week we heard a song from Zechariah, now today we get to hear one from the angels themselves. As we have already been encouraged to “Hark!” which means listen up, the herald angels sing. And what is it that they are saying: Glory to the new born King…peace on earth, mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled.”

**Slide 2: What do you do with good news?**

Here is my question for the day, what do you do with good news?

Are any of you familiar with the Red Blur? Some of you may have had the pleasure.

**Slide 3: Astro Van**

A few years ago my family owned a maroon Chevy Astro van affectionately called the Red Blur. We came across her in a newspaper ad, remember those? She was being sold by a private seller and we went to his home to check it out. As usual, at the time we were in need of a van, and budgets were tight. Before long I was shaking hands with the Astro’s owner Mr. Bob Johnson. Bob had recently moved into the area from out of state. He had inherited a vehicle and had no use for the van. Bob was extremely hospitable and gregarious and as it turns out, Bob was a pastor. I was in seminary at the time and was working at a church myself. After we had enjoyed our common ground Bob began to sell me the van. He spoke of how reliable it was, how accommodating. He said anyone who has ever owned an Astro has loved it and speaks highly of it…We were sure to love this vehicle. And on top of it all, Bob was going to take $1,000 off the top. He would settle for less because, as he put it, I was doing God’s work.

I remember looking at my wife and we were both startled by such good news. It seemed too good to be true. A nice guy, a pastor no less selling us an amazing van with some miles yes, but not a scratch… those were to come later…and willing to offer an amazing discount…This as good news, it was news we needed to hear.

**Slide 4: What do you do with good news?**

What do you do with good news? Maybe you look at those around you in wonder…can it really be true? Maybe you’re stunned and don’t react at all. Maybe you jump up and down in excitement.

At the time we did a mix of all of these things. I mean, I didn’t know Bob from Adam, but he was nice enough…he seemed genuine…but do I trust him? We shook hands, transferred the title and accommodated our family with the Red Blur. And after owning an Astro van, I am convinced that anyone who has even owned one would have an complaints about such a fine automobile. We loved that van and it served us well. And here I am now telling you about how great my good news was.

What do you do with good news?

Let’s ask the shepherds this question as they sat on a normal night watching their normal sheep doing normal things.

**Slide 5: Scripture**

**Slide 6: Scripture**

Read Luke 2:8-20

Remember now, we want to focus on the Songs of Christmas, and this section of Scripture is all narrative. It is telling a story. And the angel’s message to the shepherds was all instruction and straight up information: “A savior is born! He is the Christ! You’ll find him in a manger.”

**Slide 7: Shepherds**

The Israelites had been longing for God to send someone to save them. But a child? in a manger? Did we miss something? Oh, and by the way, why are we being told this news? I’m a shepherd, I get spit on and jeered at every time I go into town. This must be some kind of trick. But how could it be a trick. I saw what I saw…I felt what I felt.

Then someone broached a bright idea…Let’s go check it out. What have we got to lose? Let’s confirm what the Lord has revealed to us.”

**Slide 8: What do you do with good news?**

What do you do with good news?

The first thing to do with Good news is consider your source.

**Slide 9: Consider your source**

Cassi told me she recently won a $2,000 family portrait package. Wow great news! They headed down to Wayzeta to claim their prize. She came to find that while indeed she did win one moderately sized photo, what she really won was the opportunity to spend thousands of dollars more on additional prints.

The shepherds have many questions swirling in their heads yet they were able to stop and say, this is a revelation from the Lord. Even though this news dose not make sense, we need to trust it. We need to go to Bethlehem.

So they do. They trust the message and come to find Mary and Joseph and the child just as the angel had said. Now that they know this good news is verified and true, what did the shepherd’s do with this good news? Verse 17, they reported it!

**Slide 10: Tell about this news!**

They told everyone they could. For now it did not matter that they were lowly shepherds, covered in dirt and smelling of sheep. These men had good news to share! And it was so good that the people who heard were amazed as well. They understood that this was not some shepherd’s prank. They understood the source of this news. God had revealed something glorious. Mary too remembered these events…the passage says she considered them carefully. She too knew, better than anybody, the source of this news and she did not want to forget these moments.

**Slide 11: Glorify God**

Verse 20 says the shepherds returned home, glorifying and praising God…everything happened just as they had been told.

Pastor Bob was a shepherd of his own flock, and he was sharing with my wife and I some good news. Now, of course, the purchase of a van cannot compare to the coming of the Son of God…but we had to consider our source…we were not dealing with a slick salesman…we were talking with a shepherd. We were not hearing this news from a guy who knew a guy. Wee were getting it straight from the owner, the one who was in control. The Owner was revealing this news to us. And though this was no miraculous event, I do believe it was a blessing to our family from God…a good van for a good price was good news to us at the time. We made the purchase and drove away glorifying and praising God. We both had such peace about the decision. Yes, it was only a van, a great van by the way that served us well, but it was also a touch of provision from God. And I have carefully remembered this event because everything happened just as we were told. We did love that van and we told everyone who would listen how great it was. The Red Blur got us to a lot of places, and it was a sad day when it was hauled away…but our glorifying and praising God still remains. And when you choose to glorify God, you experience peace.

**Slide 12: Song of Peace**

And this is the song of peace we hear from the angels: Glory to God in heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favors.”

When we glorify God, we draw near to him or rather we recognize his nearness to us. Think of a child in fearful and alone in a dark room, but if he calls out to his father, the same room is no longer scary…with the father comes peace. We live in a turbulent and trying world. It’s full of false promises and slick salesmen. Did you know that even though we live in the best economy in the world and we enjoy the best that technology has to offer, 70% of young people cite anxiety as a major issue, and 34% see it as a minor issue, that means that only 4% of the teenagers you come in contact with experience some semblance of peace. A new senate report found that suicide and alcohol related death are at a 100 year high. Could it be a coincidence that these numbers grow while our society continues to distance itself from hope-filled faith in the Prince of Peace? We continue to separate ourselves from the Father? Peace cannot be purchased…there will always be a new thing to worry about, but in Christmas, in this song of the angels we can truly find peace, and like those smelly, low class shepherds, we can report to others this peace that we have found. That’s what you do with good news, you tell others about it! And people might not listen, but some people might, because we live in a broken world that yearns for the peace that Jesus alone can provide. Wealth and technology, higher standards of living, higher education…all of these fail to provide peace.

**Slide 13: Summary**

And this is our experience of Christmas…consider the source of this season’s good news, to share it with all who will listen and we glorify God in perfect peace…

**Slide 14: Lyrics**

Hark the Herald Angels sing “Glory to the newborn King

Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled.”

Joyful all ye nations rise, join the triumph of the skies

With angelic host proclaim “Christ is born in Bethlehem.”

Hark the herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King”

Amen.