

November 27, 2022

Fear Not, Luke 2:10

By Aaron Shamp

Introduction

- Jesus is born and we read about the announcement and response to his birth.
 - In a sense, we are all the shepherds. None of us are eyewitnesses to Jesus' birth. We all receive the news of Jesus through a messenger.
 - Therefore, we learn about responding to Jesus—and to Christmas—in this announcement and response. What is the primary theme? Joy.

The Angel of the Lord

- What do our angels look like? They are usually cute, infantile... safe.
 - The Bible doesn't tell us much about the appearance of angels, but I don't think we represent them correctly.
- The shepherds are watching their flocks at night and an angel appears among them.
 - That would be startling but it says they are *terrified*. Why?
 - "...and the glory of the Lord shone around them..." (Luke 2:9).
 - Every time we see people exposed to the glory of God it is terrifying (Moses, the disciples, Paul).
 - We tend to domesticate God. The fact that the Bible repeatedly shows us terror instead of comfort when people enter his presence should stand out.
 - They are exposed to the *real* God.
- **Point:** God is infinitely holy, powerful, and knowing.
- **APP:** Do you know the real God?
 - We have the tendency to project ourselves onto God. You need to resist this.

- You must know the real God in his Word, prayer, and corporate worship.
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The Shepherd's Fear

- Let's go back to the shepherd's terror. Why are people consistently afraid of God's presence?
 - Who was the first person to be afraid of God's presence? Adam.
 - He said that he was afraid because he was naked (Gen. 3:10). Now they had always been naked but this is different. This is exposure of what you don't want seen. This is recognition of vulnerability.
 - What is fear? 1 John 4:18 says fear involves punishment.
- **Point:** Sin produces a terror of the holiness of God.
 - Why are sinful men and women so terrified of the presence of God?
 - Imagine you are impersonating a police officer. You might be nervous but then if a real cop shows up you'll be terrified. You're scared of being caught by the real thing.
 - We try to be our own masters and lords. When we come into the presence of the real Master and Lord of life it's terrifying.
- **APP:** Are you allowing your sin to keep you from God?
 - There are many people holding onto unbelief because they fear God.
 - Christian, you might also still be hiding behind the trees...
 - How can we be freed from this fear?

Our Joy

- There's only one way to be delivered from fear: love.
 - "There is no fear in love; instead, perfect love drives out fear, because fear involves punishment. So the one who fears is not complete in love. We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:18-19).

- How does God show his love for us?
 - “God’s love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him. Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9-10).
 - When you see what he did and behold it then your fear can be turned to joy.
 - Consider all of those people who witnessed the presence of God. Do you think they ever could have imagined how God would have presented himself?
- Point: The love of God drives out our fears.
 - This is one way that you can *know* that you have met God. Do you have his joy? Or are you still in fear?
- APP: Embrace the love of God and be joyful!
 - What do you fear? Punishment... rejection... failure... the future... death?
 - All of our fears are silenced when we embrace God’s love.
 - The invitation to the shepherds is an invitation to us. This Christmas, meet Christ and experience his joy.

End Notes