

The Shepherd Song

by Carter Conlon

The Shepherd's Song is a message of hope in times of hardship, reminding us that God's presence and provision are available to those who are faithful and obedient.

Duration: 56:50

Scripture: Psalm 46:1-3, Isaiah 41:10, Isaiah 43:2, Matthew 6:33, Luke 2:10-14, Revelation 3:20

Topics: "Trust In God", "Faithfulness Of God"

Description

This sermon is a powerful message about trusting in God in the midst of fear and uncertainty. It highlights the importance of having a deep trust in God's provision and protection, even in times of calamity. The Shepherd's Song of Solomon from Luke chapter 2 is used to illustrate how God's faithfulness and presence can be experienced in the darkest of times, leading to a song of trust and praise in the hearts of believers.

Transcript

I'd like to speak to you this morning a message that the Lord has put on my heart called the Shepherd's Song from Luke chapter 2. If you'll go there, please, in the New Testament, and we'll pray together while you're finding that. Luke chapter 2, the Shepherd's Song. Father, I thank you, God, with all my heart, Lord, that you are speaking to your church in this last hour of time.

I thank you for the anointing of the Holy Spirit. I thank you, God, that I don't have to stand in my own strength. I don't have to preach from my own reasoning.

Lord, God, I give you praise and glory that you see fit to touch such a frail vessel, and God, to give me your word that I may bring something of substance to your people. Feed your sheep, Lord. Feed your flock today, O God.

Let grace and glory come into the hearts of your people. Let there be a shout of praise, God, when there's only been heaviness. You say in your word, Lord, that you take the spirit of heaviness and you replace it with a garment of praise.

I'm asking you to do that today, Lord. I'm asking, God, that not a single person in the annex, any overflow room, in this sanctuary leave this house with hands heavy and hearts heavy. I ask, O God, that your word do what your word has always been sent to do.

Your word says that you send your word and you bring healing. Bring healing, Lord, to the wounded heart. Bring healing, God, to the blinded eyes.

Bring healing, Lord, to those that are captivated by the situations of the hour we're living in. Lord, open our eyes. Open heaven, Lord, to us today.

Show us something deeper, farther, Lord, than our circumstance. God, help me, Lord. Help me to be able to speak this.

Help me, God, to be able to touch something of your heart that you've revealed to me. Lord, I thank you for this. Lord, that we're not interested in hearing sermons.

We've got to hear from you now. We have to hear from heaven, Lord. This has got to be from your heart.

I thank you, Lord, for the ability to convey this in Jesus' mighty name. The Shepherd's Song. Luke chapter 2, beginning at verse 1. And it came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed.

And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea under the city of David, which is called Bethlehem because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be taxed with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child.

And so it was that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. The angel said unto them, Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

This shall be a sign to you. You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, goodwill toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us go now even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told unto them.

The shepherds sung. Now, verse 1, it says, It came to pass in those days that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And you thought New Jersey and New York

were the first ones that came up with this idea.

But the days of Roman rule were marked by heavy taxation. Of all the conquered territories and countries that they conquered, they would levy very strict and quite often very severe taxation upon these people. According to Zondervan's encyclopedia, here are the taxes that the Romans instituted.

They had a land tax, real estate taxes, a poll tax, export and import taxes, crop taxes, income tax, taxes to use a road, taxes to enter certain towns, taxes on animals and vehicles, assault tax, a sales tax, a servant tax, taxes on the transfer of property, and even an emergency tax. They would have had easy pass on donkeys had it been possible in that time. Over the taxation of the people that were conquered was placed a man called a Roman censor.

This particular official of Rome would come in to places like Galilee and Israel, for example, and they would sell franchises, which were a five-year contract, to the highest bidder who would be responsible for collecting the taxes in a specific district or a specific area. The tax collector, in the case of Israel, of course, the tax collectors were quite often Jewish people who were considered traitors. Do you remember Zacchaeus? When Christ came to his house, how he had cheated the people and said, if I've cheated any man, and there should really be no if in his statement, he had undoubtedly cheated people, but he said, I'll restore it fourfold.

Matthew was the tax collector who wrote the Gospel of Matthew. And the tax collector was given a quota, and he was allowed to collect an open-ended commission for himself. And so quite often they were bribed by the rich.

The rich would come and say, look, I'll give you X amount of currency if you will exempt me from paying certain taxes. And so tax collectors got very, very wealthy in their society, and they were very, very hated. They took a lot of bribes.

And much of the revenue from the poor, and that's who really were taxed the most, is the poor, and went to support an opulent lifestyle in Rome. And it was given to Roman citizens, many of whom thought at that season that it was beneath their dignity to work for a living. And Luke chapter 2 verse 1 tells us that even while all this is going on, Caesar Augustus decided, when it says that all the world should be taxed, that's really not a good translation of that word.

It really means a census. In case, in other words, I'm missing somebody. There might be somebody out there in my kingdom, Caesar said, that is escaping taxation.

So what we will do is we will cause a census to be taken. Now, the way this was done in Israel is that the records were kept of your family and the place you were born, but they were all kept in your hometown. And so a decree went out, and the decree said that everybody has to go back to their hometown so that they can be recorded, who was your father, where was your family, and of course, ultimately the bottom line is what do you work and how much money do you make, and how much tax should you be paying.

And in order to conduct this census, people were forced to leave their homes. They lost income from employment. It was a great personal hardship, and there were no exceptions.

For example, Mary was very close to the time to go into labor, to have her first child. But that made no difference. She had to get on the back of a donkey, and as I see it in the map of the life and times of Christ that I had in preparing this message, it appears the distance between Nazareth and Bethlehem was

somewhere between 50 and 60 miles.

So it's a long and an arduous journey, especially on a donkey. And can you imagine being in Mary's position, where days away really from going into labor and taking this long and arduous journey. Now, people are forced to leave their homes.

People are losing income from employment. They're put into a place of great personal hardship, loss, and even danger, because there was always the danger that some harm was going to come. There were robbers along many of these routes, all because of the greed and the lack of caring of others.

I can't help but think of the parallel to our society today. So many are being forced from their homes, and we're just starting to touch the tip of the iceberg of where this is going to go, folks, and how difficult it's going to get for so many, how many will lose their jobs, how many will have to pay this extra emergency tax and tax burden that will come on society, all because of the greed of some who cared more for themselves than they do for the betterment of the entire country. Can you imagine the conversations along the way as a whole society is brought into upheaval because of the greed of a few? You imagine the anger, the discontent that's being voiced, the grumbling, the complaining, the, when is this all going to end, and is this how we're destined to live? Are we, are we going to be kicked around from pillar to post, losing employment, losing homes, being brought into jeopardy just, just to pay for a few who feel it's their exclusive right to tax the entire population? I see a society hurriedly passing by.

Can you see this on the road now, Mary and Joseph? Now, Joseph obviously is taking his time. Think of what you would do. How would they travel? There, there's, there's obviously a haste in the society for everybody is, is on this journey trying to get to a place of safety, trying to find somewhere that's comfortable, somewhere where there's food on the table, somewhere where there's some kind of security, and I can see the people just literally passing, literally in the fast lane, passing Joseph and Mary, who are obviously going very slow because Joseph knew she was close to going into labor, and he couldn't obviously overextend this trip because of the implications.

And I can see all these people passing them by so they can be first to get to a place of security with a good meal and a, and a warm bed. And folks, it's, it's quite often the most vulnerable that are left behind when fear grips a society. When everybody starts running for shelter, when everybody starts looking for some kind of a safe haven, it's most often the vulnerable, the weak, the slow.

I'm not talking about mentally slow, I'm talking about physically slow that are left behind. Now, keep in mind that these are God's people of that particular season. Now, they've been taught from the Old Testament scriptures.

They know what the Bible says. For example, Isaiah in chapter 58, for time's sake, let me just read it to you. Verses 6 to 11.

Is this not the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to deal your bread to the hungry, and you bring the poor that are cast out to your house, when you see the naked, that you cover him, and that you hide not yourself from your own flesh? Now, they know this. God's people of that time have been schooled in this, just like you and I have. They know the scriptures.

They've heard it read in their synagogues very, very frequently. They've sat around their own family tables. They've studied these things.

And listen to the promises they had from God. He says, then your light will break forth as the morning. Then your health will spring forth speedily, and your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your reward.

You will be literally scooped up, or what it means, you'll be gathered up by the glory of the Lord. And the glory is the weight of God. It's the evidence of God.

It's that weightiness of the life of God, will literally scoop you up. God says, if you will do these things, I'll come behind you, and I'll gather you in my hand as it is, and I will infuse life and strength into you. And he says in verse 9, then you will call, and the Lord will answer.

You'll cry, and he'll say, here I am. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity, or empty talk. In other words, God says, if you simply do this, and don't just talk about it, if you really do reach out to those that have nobody to help them, and stop putting out a finger and looking for somebody else to blame as almost an excuse to do nothing, because there's something in the heart that says, well, this is somebody else's fault, and empty talk.

And if you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul, he says, then your light will rise in obscurity, and your darkness will be as the noon day. God said, then you're going to shine as a beacon on a hill. Then people are going to look and say, wait a minute now, in the midst of a whole society going this way, and obsessed as it is with its own provision and protection, there's a people going the other way.

And they're gathering the poor, and they're helping those that have no helper. And there will be the society, in a sense, whether or not they participate, will at least have to stop and take notice that there's somebody in it of another spirit going in another direction. And he says, your light will rise in obscurity, and even the darkest time you'll have to face will be to you as noon day.

The sun, in other words, will always be shining. You'll always have health. You'll always.

I'm talking spiritual health now. You'll always know which way to go. You'll always have a path before you.

There will be an obvious health come into your life. And in verse 11, he says, then the Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and make fat your bones. And you will be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters fail not.

Now, keep in mind, Israel knows this. They've been taught this from the Old Testament. Nobody is a stranger to this.

Just like right now, neither are you, and neither am I. I've just read to you this scripture, which is the word of God, so we're no longer strangers to these truths. Now, we can choose to be strangers to them by simply ignoring it, by simply putting it away, by simply saying, well, has anybody else got another opinion in the Bible? I'd like to see if there's any other revelation for my life. And so we can put that part of the scripture away.

Can you hear the conversation in the dining room? Now, apparently, this inn in Bethlehem, from what I read, at least, was quite a famous place. It was not just an inn. It was the inn in Bethlehem.

It's where a lot of travelers, commercial travelers in particular, on their way into Egypt would stop and stay. And it was a known place. And so you can see that everybody who's of the lineage of David in Bethlehem is rushing down the highway to get there.

I've got to be the first to get there. And you know that that's exactly the way humanity is. If there was some kind of a crisis, even in this city, and it was no longer allowable to go to our homes, then there would be a mad exodus to get the best hotel rooms in the finest and safest places.

And that's exactly what human nature is like. And so all these people rush to this hotel. Can you hear the conversation in the dining room? And beside the fireplace in the Bethlehem Inn? Can you hear the grumbling about the inconvenience? Can you hear the complaining about the greed of a few? Can you, can you just, you have to be able to hear it because they are like we are.

There's the same thread in all of humanity. And then ultimately the question comes. Somebody will have the courage to say what everybody is thinking.

And that question is, where is God in all of this? How, how, how could God let this happen? Isn't it amazing that the whole society ignores God until tragedy comes that everybody blames God for the tragedy. It's curious to say in the least. Where is God in all of this? And you can, you can hear this, this inner frustration with God himself rising in the hearts of so many people.

Why is God allowing this to happen? As if it's God's ultimate mandate to keep us all just happy and safe. And you can see this conversation going on when suddenly there's a quiet knock at the door. Just a quiet knock.

You see, God is at the door. Where is God? And suddenly there's a knock at the door. Revelation chapter 3 and verse 20, the Lord says, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

This is a people in the last book of the New Testament who had gathered to themselves what they thought to be sufficient goods to get through life and to get through whatever difficulty they might be facing in life. Only to find that outside the door is God knocking again, saying you think you have what you need, but there's something deeper that you need. And you can see this innkeeper perhaps going to the door and saying, and people saying, well, who is it out there? Well, it's just a young couple and it's a lady.

She's in labor. And the people saying, well, sorry, there's no more room here. I mean, this place is full and certainly and this is we don't want this here.

The inconvenience is going to cause us. Sorry, there's no room in the inn. Isaiah chapter 53 says it this way in verse 1, to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Who gets to know the power of God? He says in verse 2, when we see him, there's no beauty that we should desire him.

I'm thinking of that in Bethlehem. There's absolutely nothing outside that door than anybody who's self-focused wants anything to do with. There's just a young couple and she's in labor.

And you can hear the way they write it off. Well, they probably brought this mess on themselves. You know, they shouldn't be out traveling.

They should have stopped back maybe 10 miles ago. And everybody has a reason why they don't have to do anything. Humanity will always exempt itself of the very, not only the mandate, but the blessing of God

is gone.

And so here's God at the door. This is not just a couple with a woman in labor. This is God at the door, folks.

You have to realize this. This is God in the flesh about to be birthed into the world, knocking at the door, but everyone is too busy. Too busy complaining about taxes, too busy looking about how they're going to survive, too busy trying to scheme how they're going to get out of the census.

And I can just hear the plans that are going on about how to evade this whole thing and how to get vengeance and get even and everything else that's going on. So who gets to see the power of the Lord? To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Who gets to know this glory spoken about in Isaiah? Who gets to walk in this? In Luke chapter two and verse eight says, there were in the same country, shepherds abiding in the field and keeping watch over their flock by night. By night, but folks, I'm telling you something.

There is a great revelation of God coming in this generation, but not where we think it should come. There are pastors in this country and in other places who have toiled in obscurity. They have been faithful.

They've gone to the prayer closet. They brought the word of God to the people. The people may not be overly interested, but they brought the word of God to their congregations.

They've had a compassionate heart and they have cared for these little flocks that God has given them. And the Lord says, I can't get in to the masses. I can't get into those who have sat in the synagogue.

I can't get into those who have been taught, but have chosen to ignore what they've learned. And so he goes in a place where people are outside of it all. Just a faithful group of shepherds keeping watch over their flocks by night.

And when you think of night, it speaks of a time of darkness. It speaks of a time of danger. It speaks of a time of death.

It was at midnight that the angel of death passed over the Egyptian society before delivering Israel out of it. It was at night that when Paul on that ship, they were in a storm that they began to search for the depth of how close they were to land and began to fear for their safety and hope for the day. And here are shepherds.

These are just pastors. These are Christian workers. They're given to prayer.

They possess the heart of God to get the people entrusted to their care through this night and into the safety of daylight. It's a single mother who's kneeling beside her bed in intercession for her little flock of children that the Lord has given to her. It's the man whose heart is turning back in this congregation and in this time saying, it's not right that these weak and fatherless children in our streets should be left behind on this journey.

It's the concerned person who stops in this mad rush for personal safety to look up and look for and help those who are having a hard time to keep up. I have been given a word from the Lord today that is prophetic for this generation and prophetic for you are sitting here today and you fit in one of these categories. You're simply a person who's concerned about others in this entire mad blind rush that we're

just beginning on of a society trying to protect and ensure its own future.

This is a word for the person sitting here today that says, I'm going to stop in this and I'm gonna help other people. I'm gonna give them a word from God. I'm gonna help those that are weak.

I'm gonna pick up those that are fallen. I'm gonna feed those that have nobody to care for them. I'm gonna give something of clothing to those who are stranded on this journey.

I'm just going to obey God. It's as simple as that. You may not even feel anything in your heart but you just simply make a decision.

I'm going to do this. I see what God says in Isaiah. I see what he said in Luke chapter four.

I'm just going to be what God has called me to be as a Christian person. I'm just gonna stop. I'm not joining the mad rush of self-preservation.

I'm just gonna stop and whatever that costs me that's what it will cost me. But I'm just gonna stop and I'm gonna do something. I'm not gonna be the Levite that passes by the wounded men.

I'm not gonna be the Pharisee that passes by on my way to study scripture, on my way to sing songs in church. I'm gonna be the Samaritan who stops and does something about it in this generation. And here's the promise the Lord gave me to give you in Luke chapter two and verse nine.

It says, And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them and they were sore afraid. And the angel said to them, Fear not. Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a savior which is Christ the Lord. Folks, suddenly, suddenly heaven opens. Suddenly everything makes sense.

Suddenly you see the end from the beginning. Suddenly you know why you're a Christian. Why you go to church.

Why we sing songs. Why we read our Bible. Why the Holy Spirit is given to us.

Where we are, where we're going and why we're even left in this earth after coming to Christ as our savior. Suddenly it all makes sense. And suddenly there's a joy that comes with it.

God Almighty, I'm now sharing your heart for people. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. The Son of God did not come into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved.

Praise be to God. Suddenly, suddenly, suddenly, suddenly the heavens begin to open and everything begins to make sense. Where is God in all of this? Where is He? He's where He's always been.

He's standing at the right hand of the poor according to what I read in the Old Testament. It's where He's always been. He's reaching out to the oppressed.

He's healing the bruised and hard. He's putting the key in the prison doors and helping people to get out into safety. He's giving bread to those who are without.

He's being a father to the fatherless. He's got the children sitting on His knee and He's blessing them. That's where God is in the midst of all of this.

And that's where God's people are in the midst of crisis. It's in crisis where you really find out who the people of God are. Jesus said at midnight all of a sudden there was a cry, behold the bridegroom.

And suddenly, suddenly, suddenly there were people who found out they thought they had a relationship with God and they suddenly found out that what they had was empty, bankrupt religion that couldn't show anybody how to get home in a time of darkness and could not point to the bridegroom. Isaiah the prophet says, fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites. And the word hypocrite really means actors.

It's people who have played a part in the body of Christ but they've never ever embraced the heart of God. They've just played the game. They've sung the songs.

They've done the things that they've learned to do but they've never ever embraced the heart of Jesus Christ. And sudden fear comes to them. There is no fear to the righteous.

The righteous are as bold as a lion. That's what I read in the scriptures. If you are afraid of the coming days, something's not quite right in your heart.

I'll say that without apology today. There ought to be no fear. David said, though the mountains be cast down, though the seas begin to roar, David had a heart that was fixed on God.

He knew where he was going. He knew who he was in God and he was not afraid of the coming days. Praise be to God.

Oh, I'm not saying that we don't have a measure of trepidation. I'm not saying that you and I don't have to fight the thoughts of what shall I eat and where will I live and with what will I be clothed. We wouldn't be regular normal human beings if we didn't have to go fight these thoughts.

But what I'm suggesting to you is that overriding these things is a deep set confidence in God and those who do belong to him. That though it all goes, though it all fails, though it all falls, God is going to be my keeper. God is going to give me light for my path.

God is going to cause even my darkest day to shine as the noonday sun. I'll not be among those that are wringing their hands and fearful and afraid in the coming days. I'm going to allow these hands by the grace of God to be opened to people who are failing and falling all around.

I'm going to ask God to put in my heart words that can give comfort to those who need to be comforted in the midst of the fearfulness that will grip and is gripping all of the society around us. I'm not suggesting we don't have to battle these things, but I am saying that those who are Christ will overcome these. There's an overcoming trust in God in the heart.

And I praise God for that with everything that's in my heart. I have been there, folks. I have come home from preaching a crusade to have everything I've owned in the basement.

My house literally didn't burn down. It burned in. There was nothing left.

I've been in a place where I've had nothing. I've stepped out on a winter day to jog on a country road. And I said these words to God.

I don't even have a toothbrush to brush my teeth with. But I'll tell you what I do have. Matthew 6, 33 says, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added to you.

I have walked through this fire. I've gone through this flood. I've watched God provide.

I've never been without. The Lord's been faithful. I've seen him do the miraculous.

I've watched God supernaturally move all through my life. And all it does in your heart is produce this ever deepening desire to see this multiplied in others, not just in ourselves, but in others. God, help your people to know that you're a supernatural God.

Help them to know that you do provide. If our priorities are right, if we are fixed as it is on the work of God, if we are trusting in the power of God to accomplish this work, you have never failed and you will never fail your people. David will never have to retract the scripture when he wrote, I've been young, now I'm old.

I've never seen the righteous forsaken or his seed begging for bread. David will never have to apologize for his confidence in God when we get to heaven. Praise be to God.

Bless the Lord. Luke 2 tells us that suddenly heaven opens around them. And verse 12, verse 13 rather, verse 12 says, this will be a sign to you.

You'll find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. In other words, you will find this living God in a humble place where the self-focused and proud have never thought to go. Nobody from the inn would go there, folks.

You had to go to shepherds, just people out in the field who were just being faithful. Amazing. And they went where nobody else would go.

They went where there was human need. They would have known when we get there, these people are going to perhaps need something. Well, we don't have much, but what we do have, we'll give them, even if it's just a word of encouragement.

Even if all they could do is walk in and say, you'll never know, you'll never guess what God just spoke to us about you and about this child. If that's all they had, at least they went to this place of need and they brought that which God had given to them. In verse 13 says, Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.

In other words, your ears and heart will be open to the worship of heaven. There's a worship far beyond anything we sing in this church, folks. It's far deeper.

Your ears are finally open to something that is sovereign. It comes from heaven alone. It's a song that's deeper than words, folks.

I don't know how else to explain it. It's the song of trust in God. It's the song when you and I are reaching on and we're seeing God provide.

In impossible places, there's something of God comes into the spirit. It's a song of confidence and trust that people can see, David said. It's not a song they hear, they see it.

You and I walking through the midst of the same storm as everyone else around us, but we are able like Paul to stand on the deck of this perishing ship and saying, be of good cheer. I have been with God and God has spoken to me. Yes, the ship will be lost, but everyone who listens to what God's put on my heart will be saved.

Your life will be saved. It will be spared. There's a song of praise as Paul takes the bread and breaks it and says, here, take eat.

Here, you eat. There's patting people on the back and encouraging people. Our lives are not something we just sing on Sunday.

Our lives become a song of praise to God, a song of trust in God. That's why David said he's put a new song in my heart. Many will see it and fear and trust in the Lord.

Thanks be to God. I used to wonder when I first read that, how do you see a song? I thought we heard a song. How do you see a song? Praise God.

It's a living expression of trust in God. Bless God. Thank you, God.

Thank you, Lord. Hallelujah. Verse 14 says, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.

In other words, the divine purpose of God, the depths and compassion of his love will be made known to you. Glory to God in the highest. On earth peace, goodwill.

That means God's goodwill. That means the hour of redemption is here. That means there's hope for the future.

That means it's not all about the here and now. It's about something that God wants to do now and extend into the hereafter. Goodwill towards men.

In verse 20, it says, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they'd heard and seen as it was told unto them. Yours will not be a song that's based on the circumstances of this world. It will be a song that I call the shepherd's song.

Glorifying and praising God for the things they had heard and seen as it was told to them. Things that are hidden in the inn. The people in the inn know nothing about this.

But they had seen and heard something from God. And they went back to the mountainside. They went back to the dew of the night.

They went back to what they were called to do. And they worshiped. I can see this procession of shepherds.

I see, I hear something in my spirit. I see a procession of shepherds. I see something coming into the heart of a single mother.

I hear a song that's going to stir your kids. I see something coming into the hearts of fathers that are going to turn back to this generation and say, I'm not, I'm not, I'm going to heaven, but I'm not leaving you behind. I don't care how many of you are standing on the street corner and how tough you think you are.

I'm not leaving you behind. I'm taking you with me. I hear a song coming into the small town pastor, the pastors that have struggled with 30, 40, 50 sheep, but they've been faithful and they've lived through a season where it just seemed like it was portrayed to them that you are the failures of the church world.

They've gone to seminars over the last two decades that have told them, you know, how to have a church of 10,000. And if you don't get that, somehow you failed in spite of the fact there only may be 300 people in your town. And all the methodologies that have been put their way and everything has reinforced upon them that they are failures.

But I hear heaven opening. I see something happening. The people who have been self-focused suddenly are going to be in a tailspin.

Many who have thought that they had touched heaven and really represented God are going to find themselves without oil. And I see these shepherds. I hear them all over the country beginning to sing, beginning to praise God, getting something of a vision from heaven that is hidden.

It's hidden to the self-consumed. It's hidden to those whose theological focus is on themselves. They're absolutely blinded to it.

And I see these shepherds coming together with a song that is absolutely hidden from the natural man and the natural mind only given by God himself. If you are a pastor of a small church here today, I want you to take courage. You're about to sing a song like you've never sung in your entire life.

You're about to see something of God that you've never seen before. I hear songs. Isaiah the prophet talked about a time of calamity when the earth itself is going to be shaken.

Let me very, very quickly go through this with you. He said, the Lord, in chapter 24, makes the earth empty, makes it waste and turns it upside down and scatters the inhabitants. Verse 3 says, the land shall be utterly emptied and spoiled.

Verse 4, the earth mourns and the proud or the haughty people of the earth do languish. The proud are losing heart and strength. Verse 7, the merry hearted sigh.

Verse 10, the city of confusion is broken down. Every house is shut up and no man may come in. In other words, everybody who doesn't know God is fortifying as it is their own house and saying, I'm just going to keep my supply of beans and I'm going to try to ride this thing out and I'm not giving anything to anybody.

Verse 11 says, there's crying for wine or joy in the streets. Joy is dark and the mirth of the land is gone. Verse 13, when thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree and as the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done.

Verse 14, they shall lift up their voice and sing for the majesty of the Lord. They shall cry aloud from the sea. Verse 15, glorify the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.

Verse 16, from the uttermost part of the earth, we've heard songs, songs of glory to the righteous one. Praise be to God. Isaiah said, I can't paint a more dismal day than what Isaiah saw.

But he said, I'm seeing this calamity, but I'm hearing something else. I'm hearing a song, songs of glory to the righteous one. Songs that have risen up in the hearts of those that perhaps the whole of society is overlooked, but they have found something that the self-consumed can't see.

And they come back home and they're singing this song that I call the shepherd song. Folks, we are in for a time of worship and praise in the coming days like you've never known in your entire life. We're going to know the glory of the Lord.

We're going to know something of God that doesn't come in times of ease. It only comes in times of calamity. It's a song of trust.

It's deeper. There'll be a day come when you couldn't care less if the orchestras show up. It won't matter to you if there's two, 10 or 200 in the choir.

You'll have a song in your heart. You'll have a song of trust that will just explode. It'll be just almost as if you can't wait to have somebody as frail as they might be, just sing the first note so you can join in because there'll be a song of trust in your heart that we don't, we don't have to crank it up to get it going.

It will already be there when you come in the door. You'll have been walking with God. You'll see God's faithful hand upon your children.

You'll begin to be reaching out in the Holy Spirit. The provision of God will have flowed through your hands and through your heart and through your mouth and through your lips and you will have known something of God that causes you to come in. You're going to live to see the supernatural hand of God.

See how God provides. It's miraculous how he provides, folks. And it's awesome when there's no other way that it could happen except God begin to do it.

There was a season in my life in early ministry. I know I've shared it with you I used to keep very detailed personal financial records for our home. I looked at my financial records and I said to my wife, Teresa, our electric bill is more than I make.

There's just no way this thing can work. We just don't have enough money. And the Lord spoke to my heart, said, close the book and trust me.

And folks, all I can say is that my financial situation was like a bumblebee. Aerodynamically, engineers say it should not be able to fly, but somehow it does. It flies.

I watched God do what only God can do. I've walked through this in part. Not the absolute fulfillment of these promises.

I mean, I've just known my part of it, but I've seen the faithfulness of God. I've watched God do what only God can do. I've seen bread come supernaturally.

I was one time in a halfway house. Well, I was visiting. I was not in the halfway house.

I was visiting it. And these guys, they were the ones that actually laid hands on me when I was filled with the Holy Spirit. And they were standing at the window one day, and this was a ministry run by faith.

And they were praying and they had no food in the house. And they were looking out the window and it was a cold fall day, I remember. And they were standing there.

These guys are all out of jail and they're getting prepared to go back into society. And they prayed and said, Lord, we're hungry. We'd like something to eat today.

If you could, we'd like some groceries, even like at the moment across the other side of the street was a lady with two big shopping bags of groceries. We'd like some food, even like the food that's in those shopping bags. Now she'd already passed the house.

She already walked by on the other side. They had just stopped speaking when that lady stopped, crossed the street, came back to the house, walked up on the porch, put the two bags down and walked away. And they saw it.

They saw it. What kind of worship do you think happened in that place that day? The shepherd's song. They saw the provision of God.

They knew that the destiny of God was not only that they were to be recipients of this blessing, but they were to be also givers of this blessing as the Lord began to give them the enablement to do that. Praise be to God. Would you stand please? I want us to sing a song this morning together.

It's a song that is in the scripture and the Lord gave me a tune for this a few years back. It's Psalm 46. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth be removed and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. There is a river, that means provision.

The streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High. I'd like you to learn this song because you're going to have to sing it a lot in the coming days. I will trust in God all of my days.

Though the seas may roll, mountains leave their place, hearts of men may fail. Tears on every face. Safely I will stand in God's amazing grace.

From what may encroach, I say, From what may encroach, I say, I will trust in God, I will trust in God all of my days Though the seas may roll and mountains need their place Hearts of men may fail, tears on every face Safely I will stand in God's amazing grace I will trust in God, I will trust in God Come what may in Christ I say, I will trust in God I will trust in God, I will trust in God Come what may in Christ I say, I will trust in God Firstly, if you're lost and need a savior, you're always welcome to come to this altar. The Lord will receive you and forgive your sins. If it's in your heart to turn from sin and to accept the fact that He died for you on the cross.

For the backslider, the one that knew God but you walked away from God, this altar is always open to you. And you can come home to God. Don't let the devil stop you and rob you of the blessing of having this life in Christ that you need.

But specifically today, it's for the fearful. Fear is a human emotion and it's something we all have to deal with. And it's not wrong to say, God, I'm afraid.

And it's not a shameful thing. We all go through seasons of fear. But God will come and say, listen, I'll open something to you of my heart and of heaven that will take this fear out of your heart.

You'll go home singing a song that is so deep. It's something of trust in me. And if you're afraid of the days ahead, I just want to encourage you to come and sing this song as you come and sing it by faith.

I will trust in God. No matter what happens, God will not fail me. He will not forsake me.

And as you sing it to God, God will sing it back to you. He will say back to you, you can trust in me. I will not fail you.

I will not forsake you. I will keep you in the very palm of my hand. And you'll not be listed among those who fail and faint in the coming days.

You'll be kept supernaturally by the power of God. If that's in your heart today and you'd like to come to this altar, please just do so. And we'll pray together at the end.

I will trust in God. Come what may, I say, I will trust in God. I will trust in God.

I will trust in God. Come what may, I say, I will trust in God. First verse.

I will trust in God all of my days. Though the seas may roll and mountains leave their place, Hearts of men may fail, chains on every face, Safely I will stand in God's amazing grace. I will trust in God.

I will trust in God. Come what may, in Christ I say, I will trust in God. I will trust in God.

I will trust in God. Come what may in Christ I say, I will trust in God. I will trust in God.

I will trust in God. Come what may in Christ I say, I will trust in God. I will trust in God.

I will trust in God. Come what may in Christ I say, I will trust in God. Thank you Pastor David Wilkerson who founded this church.

God, I pray for a special blessing of the Lord to come on him today and his wife Gwen and their family. Lord, the trust that you placed in this man's heart has been infectious in this house. It has encouraged us, it has encouraged me to believe you, Lord, for everything that I need to trust you for in the future.

I thank you for this man of God. And I pray, Lord, that you fight against every one of his enemies that will ever, ever come against him, Lord. Fight against these enemies, God.

I thank you, Lord. I thank you, Father. I pray that in his heart today there be a song.

I pray, God, a song of trust so deep, so profound come into his heart and come into Sister Gwen's heart. I pray that they can sing together in their home today. I pray, God, that you do something so deep just because we ask you to.

Bless this man of God, Lord. Bless him today. Bless his coming in, bless his going out, Lord.

Come and just surround the very home where they are, Lord God. Thank you, Lord, that you have used this man of God to give us confidence for the days ahead. You've spoken to us.

You've given us a pattern to follow, Lord, and we thank you for it. Pray, God, for the elders of this church, for the pastors, Lord, for the choir, for the orchestra, for everyone who ministers in this house, Lord. Let this be a house of confidence from this day forward that nobody walked in here as a stranger finding anybody terrified.

God, from any of our ushers to our security staff to people at the book table to those who are involved in maintenance, to every ministry to those who greet our guests, Lord, may this be a house of confidence, Lord God. Father, I pray there be a song in this church that can be seen before it can be heard. God Almighty, let it be a seen song.

Lord, let everyone who comes in say there's such a confidence in the hearts of these people. I pray for a graciousness, a compassion here. Lord, so far beyond anything we could ever do in the flesh.

It has to come from the Holy Spirit of God. We yield our lives to this, O God. We yield our lives to trusting you, Lord.

I yield my life anew and afresh, and I ask you, God, to plant within our hearts, Lord, this trust that can only come from the Holy Spirit. It can only come to those who say, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit. We commit ourselves, Lord, into your hands, no matter what happens in this city.

Whether or not, Lord, there be safety in our streets, God, we'll not be found among those who are, Lord, just living to survive and forgetting about others, Lord. God, thank you, Lord. There'll always be a song here.

There'll always be a welcome here. There'll be food. We ask you, Lord, to open heaven financially to this house, that there be always food in this house, Lord.

I pray, God, that the hungry can find a meal here. I pray, Lord, the naked can find clothing. I pray, Father, that those that are confused and fearful can find comfort here.

Oh, God, oh, God, oh, God. Lord, do something so deep, so profound. Let the worship be so far beyond anything we've ever known, Lord.

God almighty, thank you, Lord. We pray for our city leaders. We pray for Mayor Bloomberg.

We pray, God, for all the members of council. We pray for government. We pray for our leaders in Congress.

We pray for the Senate. We pray for our president. We pray for whoever our president will be.

God, we pray for wisdom. Give them grace to turn to you. Give them grace to turn to you, Lord.

Give them grace, oh, God, to bend their knee to the Christ of heaven. God, we thank you. I pray that everyone's heart would open, Lord.

Nobody would lock the work of God out of their hearts. I thank you for this, Father. I thank you, God.

We pray for mercy, Lord, on this society and on this city. Let the mercy of God flow like a mighty river. Bring in thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions into your kingdom in the coming days, Lord.

We give you praise. We give you glory. We thank you, God, with all our hearts.

Hallelujah, hallelujah. Give him praise today.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/17/SID17485.mp3>

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