

Luke 2:15-20. the Shepherds' Visit to Bethlehem.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The sermon emphasizes the faith of the shepherds, the joy of sharing the Good News, and the importance of thoughtfully receiving God's word.

Scripture: Luke 2:17

Topics: "Faith And Obedience", "Meditating On Scripture"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer emphasizes the faith and gratitude of the shepherds who believed in the news of Jesus' birth before seeing Him, highlighting the importance of believing without seeing. The shepherds shared the good news with others, reflecting the duty of believers to share the message of Christ with those who do not know Him. Mary pondered the events surrounding Jesus' birth in her heart, illustrating the significance of reflecting on and keeping God's word. The sermon warns against listening to God's word carelessly, using comparisons from Ezekiel and James to emphasize the need for deep reflection and meditation on Scripture. The importance of treasuring and meditating on God's word is underscored through a description from the book of Psalms.

Transcript

We find that the shepherds believed the news they had heard. They did not say, "Let us go and see whether this thing is come to pass;" but they said, "Let us now go and see this thing which has come to pass." They believed before they had seen. "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." They spoke also as if they felt grateful for having heard the tidings; for they added, "which the Lord has made known to us." Truly they had reason to be grateful--for God had shown them very great favor. Let us not forget that we also are among those to whom the Lord has made known the birth of his Son. There are millions on this earth who have never heard of the love of God, in sending a Savior; but we have heard of it from our infant days. Do we, like these shepherds, long to see our blessed Redeemer?

How much Joseph and Mary must have been delighted at the entrance of the shepherds! Though overlooked by the world, the holy child was honored by these poor men. Even now there are only a few who acknowledge him as their Lord and Master, and these few are generally poor, like the shepherds of Bethlehem.

These good men did not keep the things they had heard and seen, a secret. The angel had said that he brought glad tidings which should be to all people; therefore the shepherds told the news to all. Like them, if we believe in Christ ourselves, we shall speak of him to those who know him not.

How did the people receive the tidings the shepherds brought? They wondered; but probably they soon forgot what they had heard--while Mary "kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart." This is the way in which sermons should be heard, and in which the Bible should be read. All who get good from what they hear, keep it, and ponder it in their hearts. But how many cast from their minds what they hear!

There are two comparisons used in the Scriptures to show the careless way in which people hear the word of God. One of these comparisons is contained in Ezekiel 33:31-32. The Israelites listened to the preaching of Ezekiel as people listen to one who can play well on an instrument, and who can sing a lovely song. It is not necessary to think of the music we have heard; it is enough if it pleases us while we are hearing it--but we should not listen to sermons in this manner, and think it enough, if they amuse us.

The other comparison may be found in the first chapter of James's Epistle. It is there said that some listen to God's word as a person looks in a mirror, and then goes away and forgets what he has seen. Such listeners soon lose the good impressions they have received, and continue worldly-minded, and ungodly.

There is a beautiful description in the first Psalm, of the right manner of receiving the word. The godly man is represented as meditating in God's law, day and night.

One verse of God's holy word laid up in the heart, will do us more good than a whole chapter hastily read, and little considered. Are there any passages of the Scriptures which are dear to our hearts? Has any verse strengthened us in the hour of temptation; or comforted us in the day of trouble? Have we laid up any in store against the day when we shall walk through the valley of the shadow of death, when flesh and heart will fail, and when no mortal arm can sustain our sinking souls?

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