

JESUS CHANGED MY LIFE
SHEPHERDS - Telling His Story Is Now My Business
Advent Worship Series – Week 4
December 23, 2007

WORSHIP SERVICE OUTLINES

Each worship outline contains all elements needed for your worship service. The order of each service presented is only a *suggestion*. No doubt changes will be needed to accommodate the flow and worship style of your corps. The outlines are flexible and allow opportunities to “cut and paste” as needed. If you are blessed with instrumental or vocal music resources, you may find there is more structured material here than needed. It is recommended that the headings of each section of the service be included in the bulletin.

Announcements and Offering

SB#108 – Hark! The herald angels sing	TB-270 – Hark! The Herald Angels Sing	HTD4-T5 (3 vs.)
Additional Optional Songs		
SB#100 – Angels, from the realms of glory	TB-398 – Come and Worship (Regent Sq.)	HTD4-T12 (4 vs.)
SB#112 – It was on a starry night HC#180	TB-535 – same HC-280	HCD16-T20
SB#113 – Joy to the world!	TB-87 – Joy to the World!	HTD4-T9 (3 vs.)
SB#114 – Light of the world HC#146 – Here I am to Worship	TB-653 – Here I am to Worship HC-146	HCD13-T16
SB#105 – Do you know the song that the angels sang	TB-627 – Glory in the Highest	No CD
SB#125 – The angel Gabriel from Heaven came,	TB-624 – Gabriel’s Message	No CD
SB#126 – The first noel the angel did say	TB-857 – The First Noel	HTD6-T18 (3 vs.)
CF#17 – Angels we have heard on high	CF-17	No CD

Call to Worship:

“Blessed are the meek,” Jesus explained. Blessed are the available. Blessed are the conduits, the tunnels, the tools. . . .

That’s why the announcement went first to the shepherds. They didn’t ask God if he was

sure he knew what he was doing. Had the angel gone to theologians, they would have first consulted their commentaries. Had he gone to the elite, they would have looked around to see if anyone was watching. Had he gone to the successful, they would have first looked at their calendars.

So he went to the shepherds. Men who didn't have a reputation to protect or an ax to grind or a ladder to climb. Men who didn't know enough to tell God that angels don't sing to sheep and that messiahs aren't found wrapped in rags and sleeping in a feed trough.

(One Incredible Moment, page 31)

SB#118 – O little town of Bethlehem	TB-136 – same	HTD3-T5 (3 vs.) Bethlehem
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#220 – Incarnate	HC-220	HCD20-T20
SB#111 – It came upon the midnight clear	TB-133 – same	HTD9-T7
SB#132 – While shepherds watched their flocks by night	TB-125 – Winchester Old TB-123 – same	HTD11- 15 (4 vs.)

Responsive Scripture/Candle Lighting:

Leader: How prestigious was a local shepherd at the time of Jesus' birth? Shepherding was one of those occupations that everyone needed and no one desired. Hebrews in particular prized cleanliness and purity. Life among sheep lent itself to tired feet, long work shifts, and unwanted aromas.

Who were the first human visitors? They bore names nowhere recorded in the Bible. Yet whatever their names may have been, they graced the guest list for the most joyful moment human history had yet contained.

Solo 1: Come, let us adore him.

Solo 2: Immanuel, God with us.

Leader: Imagine the wonder of that evening for those humble field hands. One moment the skies were dark, and their moods were perhaps darker. The next moment angels were in their presence—angels with amazing news. Surely the shepherds shared our questions: “Why here? Why us?” And they were afraid.

[Lighting of the fourth Advent candle.]

Solo 2: As we light the fourth candle, we are called to open our hearts to the

miracle of Christ's coming and to his plan for our lives.

Leader: But these simple men followed the simple instructions the angels had given them. They made their way to Bethlehem and took part in an experience that countless generations of Christians have envied. As they left, they told everyone in their path of the things that had happened to them. Their lives would never again be the same; the sky would never seem so dark. They would know that just as they kept watch over their sheep by night, Someone far greater was keeping watch over them.

Solo 1: And perhaps as they grew old, their minds returned to that remarkable picture of the skies opening up. As soon as the first angel had delivered his message, “a vast host of others—the armies of heaven” (Luke 2:13) appeared, all of them praising God:

All: “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased” (Luke 2:14).

Solo 2: These words would not be forgotten—not as long as the shepherds had life and breath. Angels could appear to them. And there would be peace on earth “to those with whom God is pleased.”

Leader: And who would have thought that God might favor a shepherd? (*Why the Nativity*, pages 79-81, 82-83)

[NOTE: It is recommended that either the movie clip *OR* the drama be chosen for the service—*NOT BOTH*.]

Movie Clip



The Nativity Story – The Journey of a Lifetime, a Story for All Time
(Distributed by New Line Home Entertainment)

Scene 19 into 20

Start: 1:19:50 Crying...birth of Jesus

End: 1:25:28 Mary looks at baby

Optional Movie Clips

Close to Jesus – The Stories of Those He Touched

Disc 2 – Joseph of Nazareth

(Distributed by Artisan Home Entertainment)

Scene 10

Start: 1:02:13 Star

End: 1:05:34 “They’re here for him...”

Jesus of Nazareth (Distributed by Artisan Home Entertainment)

Scene 18

Start: 49:41 Bethlehem

End: 52:12 Star

Drama: One More Time

SB#113 – Joy to the world!	TB-87 – Joy to the World!	HTD4-T9 (3 vs.)
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CF#17 – Angels we have heard on high	CF-17	No CD

HC#169 – Hallelujah	HC-169	HCD15-T19
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#123 – Shine on Us	HC-123	HCD11-T13

Congregational Prayer: [Select a person from the congregation to read the following prayer from their seat.]

Dear Savior, I thank you that you are *my* Savior and *my* Lord. Thank you for coming. And for placing yourself at our mercy. Take me to the stable to learn from you. To the manger. To the cloths. To a quiet place in the straw. There I pray you would give me the right eyes and ears that I may see you wherever you might come, hear you however you might speak.

Take me to the fields to learn from the shepherds. Give me the lowly heart of those shepherds, who, because of their humility, were entrusted with such great revelation. Give me their listening heart, which with fear and trembling hung on to every word that fell from heaven. Give me their searching heart, which left their work to scour the barns of Bethlehem to find you.

It is no wonder the announcement of your birth came to them—the lowly, the listening, the searching. And it is no wonder they were chosen to be the first evangelists.

Please grant me the grace, fairest Lord Jesus, that someday I might experience a spilling of heaven's glory on the fields over which I watch. Grant me an echo of some angelic song amid the monotones of my day-to-day work. And grant me a heart to behold heavenly things in the humblest of places...Amen.

(Moments With the Savior, page 37-38)

Message – Shepherds—Telling His Story Is Now My Business

HC#120 – In the Manger	HC-120	HCD10-T20
Additional Optional Songs		
SB#153 – Thou didst leave thy throne and thy kingly crown	TB-94 – Margaret	HTD10 –T6 (4 vs.)
HC#169 – Hallelujah	HC-169	HCD15-T19
HC#219 – King of Kings, Majesty	HC-219	HCD20-T19
HC#220 – Incarnate	HC-220	HCD20-T20
HC#260 – Go, Tell it on the Mountain	HC-260	HCD24-T20

Benediction:

Lord Jesus, we come with praise and thanksgiving for the marvel and miracle of your birth we celebrate this season. Come once again to us this hour that we may rejoice because you have been born in our hearts. We pray that in all our labors, in all our relationships, in all of our life, you will live and love through us, in all our seasons of life, as our Savior and Lord. In your name, we pray.

(Colonel Henry Gariepy)

Vocal Benediction – HC#140 – O Come, All Ye Faithful	HC-140	HCD12-T20
SB#85 – O come, all ye faithful	TB-552 – Adeste Fideles	HTD3-T1 (3 vs.)
Additional Optional Songs		
HC#61 – Crown Him King of Kings	HC-61	HCD5-T11
HC#141 – All Hail the Power	HC-141	HCD13-T11
HC#149 – In Christ Alone	HC-149	HCD13-T19
HC#151 – Fairest Lord Jesus	HC-151	HCD14-T11
SB#112 – It was on a starry night	TB-535 – same	
HC#180	HC-280	HCD16-T20
HC#260 – Go, Tell it on the Mountain	HC-260	HCD24-T20

Week # 4	
DRAMA	
One More Time	
By Martyn Scott Thomas	
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Topic:	God's message
Scripture:	Luke 2:8-24
Synopsis:	Two shepherds reflect on the previous night's activity.
Characters:	Jed – a shepherd outside of Bethlehem. Willie – his friend and fellow shepherd.
Props/Costumes:	Biblical or modern dress.
Setting:	Bare stage.
Running Time:	4 minutes.

[Willie is standing center stage, looking up to the sky]

- Jed:** *[enters, walks up to Willie]* Willie, what are you doing?
- Willie:** Just looking.
- Jed:** Well, you're supposed to be looking at the sheep, not the sky.
- Willie:** I know, but they're mostly asleep.
- Jed:** Mostly is not good enough. You know Caleb will be very angry if any of his sheep wander off; especially if it's because of us.
- Willie:** They're not going anywhere.
- Jed:** How do you know?
- Willie:** They didn't go anywhere last night.
- Jed:** That was last night.
- Willie:** I know. Amazing, wasn't it?
- Jed:** Amazing that none of the sheep wandered off while we ran into town? Absolutely, but I don't think we can be so lucky two nights in a row.
- Willie:** I meant the angels.
- Jed:** Oh yeah, I don't think we'll ever be that lucky again.
- Willie:** It was pretty cool though.

Jed: I guess, but weren't you scared at all?

Willie: Uh, yeah. Didn't you hear me scream?

Jed: I thought that was the sheep.

Willie: Sheep go, [*imitating a sheep*] "Baa!" I was screaming, [*screaming very loudly, sounding scared*] "Aaaaaah!"

Jed: I hear the difference.

Willie: But it was definitely worth it. I've never seen anything like that before.

Jed: Or heard anything like it. I thought my Aunt Miriam could sing, but those angels were heavenly.

Willie: [*gives an unbelieving look to Jed*]

Jed: And what about that baby?

Willie: Lying in a manger, just like the angels said.

Jed: So, why do you think more people didn't show up?

Willie: What do you mean?

Jed: I mean, why didn't more people come to the stable?

Willie: I don't know.

Jed: And after we told them all what we saw, why didn't anybody else go to see the baby?

Willie: Maybe they didn't believe us.

Jed: Why not?

Willie: Well, look at us. We're just shepherds.

Jed: So.

Willie: We live in the fields.

Jed: So.

Willie: And we smell like sheep.

Jed: So.

Willie: Maybe if they had seen the angels, too.

Jed: Yeah, maybe that's what it was. They were waiting for the angels.

Willie: I'm sure they'd all believe then.

Jed: Maybe they'll come back.

Willie: Maybe.

Jed: Hey, wait. Is that what you were looking for?

Willie: Maybe.

Jed: So you think that if they come back, we'll be able to get some people to come out and hear their message?

Willie: I don't know. I was just hoping they'd come back for us.

Jed: Just for us?

Willie: Well, yeah.

Jed: Why would you want them to come back just for us.

Willie: I just wanted to thank them.

Jed: Thank them for what?

Willie: Thank them for making sure we didn't miss the baby.

Jed: That's a great idea. Do you mind if I look for them with you?

Willie: But, what about the sheep?

Jed: They didn't go anywhere last night. [*looks up at the sky*]

Willie: That's what I thought. [*looks up at the sky*]

[*Blackout*]

JESUS CHANGED MY LIFE

Advent Sermon – Week 4

December 23, 2007

Shepherds—Telling His Story Is Now My Business

Text: Luke 2:8-20

Do you remember “Mission Impossible”? Depending on your age, you know the head of the team as either, Mr. Phelps or Mr. Hunt. Either way, the premise was the same: the members of the team would do whatever necessary, risk any danger or hostile circumstance, to fulfill their mission.

Well, Christmas is now only two days away. The rush is just about over, and our time of preparation is almost complete. Today, we are looking at the central and perhaps one of the most familiar parts of the Christmas narrative: where some shepherds hear the great news of the birth of the Messiah, Jesus. Those simple shepherds found themselves drafted, not to an impossible, but an **incredible** mission. They were witnesses to one of the pivotal steps in God’s plan of salvation for all of humanity. True, it wasn’t an exploding tape recorder that gave the shepherds their mission: it was a large number of angels singing their mission in the sky above a hillside outside of Bethlehem. They may have started out that night as just shepherds, but because of their experiences by the next morning, they had a new role to play: they became broadcasters—telling everyone about the messengers and the manger.

This morning, as we look once again at this familiar the story of the shepherds, it is my prayer that we will all once again experience the wondrous miracle of that night. And like the shepherds, realize we, too, have an obligation to share God’s great story with the world.

I. Receiving the Mission

A. The setting.

- a. Shepherds, working class, working the night shift. This seems an unlikely group of people for God to announce the birth of His Son.
- b. God has often chosen to use regular people: David was selected as king. Twelve very normal men were chosen to become Jesus’ disciples. William and Catherine Booth, in following God’s leading for their lives, founded The Salvation Army.
- c. The shepherds were taking care of business. They were watching (protecting) their sheep. As we are faithful, we place ourselves in a position to be useful to God.

B. The Messenger—an Angel, “one with a message” appears. Angels in Scripture are always present to do God's will, and spread His message in conjunction with man's salvation

- a. In the wilderness, angels ministered to Jesus after temptation (Matt

- 4:11).
 - b. In garden of Gethsemane, angel ministered to Jesus as He prayed (Luke 22:43).
 - c. An angel rolled away the stone from the tomb (Matt. 28:2).
 - d. Angels announced Christ's return (Acts 1:10-11).
- C. Luke goes on to say, "The glory of the Lord shown around them and they were afraid." Another translation says: "terrified." I can imagine how their terror was transformed to joy when they heard the angel's good news, emphasized by the backup choir. In doing so, the shepherds received their mission.
- a. Today in David's town, a **Savior** has been born to **you**—"A Savior"—to redeem us from our sins (Matt. 1:21).
 - b. "Christ"—the anointed one, the Messiah who had been promised (Is. 7:14).
 - c. "Lord"—very God Himself, the King of kings (Rev. 1:5).
 - d. The result? Peace that comes as a result of God's favor (Rom. 5:1).

II. Responding to the Mission

- A. Having received the mission, the shepherds then had a choice to make. What would they do with this news?
- a. Receiving information is not enough. Many think education alone will transform society and its people.
 - b. What if, after the angels had gone back to heaven, the shepherds had said, "That really is good news," but then just went back to watching their sheep?
 - c. You and I are also faced with the same choices. We learn a lot about God in our Christian education classes and Bible studies. What will we do with the knowledge? Will we just keep it as head knowledge, or will we act on it?
- B. The Shepherds decided act on the information; to check out for themselves what the angels spoke about.
- a. "Let's **go** to Bethlehem and **see** this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about" (Luke 2:15).
 - b. The shepherds went to Bethlehem and found Mary, Joseph, and Jesus, just like the angels said they would (Luke 2:16).
 - c. The shepherds could have run off and started telling everyone, "Hey we just saw some angels!" But then everyone would have most likely thought they were drunk or crazy. If they had just run off and starting telling everyone about their experience on the hillside, it would have been more about the angels than about Jesus.
 - d. In checking out the truth of the angel's story, the shepherds were setting a sound example for us. History is full of examples of

people who got “off track” spiritually as a result of recklessly basing their decisions solely on a mountain top emotional experience. While emotion certainly plays an important role in our worship of God, to keep from getting carried away with the emotional high, it’s good to make sure it is really God talking to you. John says, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but **test the spirits** to see whether they are from God” (1 John 4:1).

- C. Another aspect of the shepherds responding to the mission was their effect on Mary and Joseph.
 - a. Can you picture Mary and Joseph listening to the shepherds’ experience with the angels, and what they said about their baby? Hearing them tell about it would have been comforting and would also have provided additional confirmation of their own experiences.
 - b. The shepherds’ interaction with Mary and Joseph would have reinforced their understanding of their part in God’s plan; how they needed to nurture and protect this special child.
 - c. Luke says, “Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).
 - d. When we hear testimonies of what God is doing in the lives of other people, it encourages us in our spiritual lives.

III. Relaying the Mission

- A. The shepherds completed their incredible mission when they took on the role of communicators. Luke tells us they started telling everyone who would listen about the angels’ news and the supporting evidence of finding everything “just as they had been told” (Luke 2:20).
 - a. Once we truly understand the depth of God’s love for us, we naturally want to share that love with others.
 - b. It’s like when there’s a new child or grandchild in the family, or you get the latest high-tech gadget. You want to tell everyone. You want to show everyone.
 - c. When was the last time you were excited about telling someone about Jesus?
- B. Finally, we should also remember the impact the shepherds’ testimony had on those who heard about what happened. Luke tells us, “All who heard it were amazed” (Luke 2:18).
 - a. What were they amazed about? Was it the fact that angels appeared to the shepherds? Was it the shepherds’ account of finding the holy family just as they had been told? Or was this the natural rippling out of the good news of peace and God’s favor for all people?

- b. Amazement at what God was doing was the people's same reaction on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:7, 12). Why is it that people of faith respond with surprise when God moves?
- c. As I mentioned last week, the shepherds telling everyone about the angel's announcement of the birth of Jesus may have made it easier for the Magi when they came looking for the one who was born "King of the Jews."

The shepherds heard the good news and acted upon it! When the angel said, "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people," the shepherds eagerly accepted an active role in getting the news out. This morning, I challenge you to remember back when you first received the good news of great joy. Remember how excited you were when you were first saved, and how you wanted to tell everyone about the God who loves you and forgave you? As a result of their experiences on that first Christmas night, the shepherds made telling the story of Jesus their business. How will you respond to the gift of God's Son? Will you make telling His story your business, too?