

The Babe Of Bethlehem: Changing Lives

Luke 2:8-20

Introduction:

1. What did Jesus specialize in when He walked this earth? If you ask this question to a group of people, you may get a variety of answers. Some may say, "Healing people, teaching the Bible, fulfilling prophecy, doing good deeds, showing moral character, etc."
2. These are all true, but here is the answer: He specialized in changing lives! Everywhere He went, He changed lives.
 - **Illustration:** Maniac of Gadara in Mark 5.
3. In a few days we will be celebrating Christmas – the birth of Jesus Christ. Did you know that even as a babe in Bethlehem, Jesus changed lives?
4. Here in Luke 2, a group of shepherds had their lives radically changed because of this babe in Bethlehem, Jesus Christ.
5. For over 2,000 years, Jesus has been taking lives and changing them for God's glory. He is still doing it today.
6. Every person can experience a changed life through Jesus Christ! Let's look at the example of these shepherds to see how your life can be changed through this babe of Bethlehem. How?

First, you must hear about Jesus with your ears.

1. People's lives aren't changed **by** Jesus until they hear **about** Jesus. That is a very simple thought, but very true. Jesus has the power and capability of changing anyone's life, but only if they first hear about Him.
2. Did you know that you don't have to be in a church to hear about Jesus?
 - The shepherds were in a field. vs. 8
 - All that is needed is a messenger and a listener.
3. In our text, the angels were the messengers, but do you know who God's messengers are today? God's messengers are those who already know Christ – the church, the body of Christ.
 - We are God's ambassadors on this earth. 2 Corinthians 5:20
 - This is why we put so much time, energy, and resources into outreach events (i.e. Walk Through Bethlehem). We want people to hear the message of Christ.
4. But as you tell the message, remember this: people's initial reaction to the message of Jesus may differ. **Examples:**
 - The shepherds heard and were **sore afraid**. Luke 2:9
 - Those at the temple when he was 12 heard Him and were **astonished**. Luke 2:47
 - Some that heard the shepherd's message of Christ just **wondered** at the news. Luke 2:18
 - The Pharisees heard and **derided** Him. Luke 16:14
 - Some heard and **questioned**. Luke 18:26
 - Some heard and became **mad**. Luke 4:28
 - Others heard and received Him **gladly**. Mark 12:37
5. The shepherd's initial reaction was fear. However, once they heard the entire message, they were receptive. What was your first reaction?
6. Over and over again, Jesus said, “ *...he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*” **Luke 8:8**
Nobody's life is changed by Jesus until they first hear about Jesus.

Second, you must understand the message about Jesus with your mind.

1. Matthew 15:10 states, "*And he (Jesus) called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand.*"
 - People must not only hear, but understand the message of Jesus.
 - It is incumbent on the messenger to make the message clear.
2. Many times it is not that people are **resistant** to the message of Jesus; it is simply that they don't **understand** the message of Jesus.
3. Notice how clear and specific the angel was in our text (vs. 10-12). The angel told the shepherds where Jesus was and where to find Him. The angel was simple, straightforward, and to the point. We need teaching and preaching like this today in churches.
4. If Jesus is to change your life, you must understand that Jesus wasn't **just** a good man, a prophet, or moral teacher. He was Christ the Lord! He was God in the flesh!
5. Christ came to die on the cross for our sins so He could be our Savior, giving us the gift of eternal life.
 - Notice, I said, "*gift.*" Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9
 - You cannot earn a gift, so you can forget any thought that you will be able to earn heaven by your good works. Jesus Christ paid the price for your sin in full.
6. Did you know that Satan is waging war for the control of people's minds? 2 Corinthians 4:4
 - The message of Jesus is simple and straightforward. Satan is trying to make it complex and confusing.
7. Do you want to experience a changed life through Jesus Christ? You must understand about Jesus in your inner-thinking processes.
 - Who is Jesus?
 - He is Christ the Lord.
 - Why did He come?
 - He came to be our Savior.
 - How did He accomplish this?
 - By dying on the cross for our sins and rising again the third day, defeating death.
8. There is just one thing left if you want Jesus to change your life.

Third, you must believe on Jesus with your heart.

1. A person can hear, understand, and still choose **not** to believe the message.
 - **Illustration:** In John 11:45-46, Jesus raised Lazarus back to life. They saw, they heard, they understood, but some would not believe on Christ.
2. It is obvious from our text that these shepherds believed the angel's message with all their heart (vs. 15-17), which is why they left as changed men (vs. 20).
3. You may say, "This is where I draw the line. I have a problem with this thing of faith." You don't have as big a problem with it as you might think.
 - **Illustration:** Driving down a road with cars a few feet away coming at you from the opposite direction. You do it by faith, believing those guys will honor the painted line on the ground.
 - **Illustration:** A prescription is given by a doctor and filled by a pharmacist. You, by faith, take the medication.
4. What is my point? Faith is not a feeling; it's a choice that you make of your will. Salvation does not come through a mental consent to the facts of Jesus Christ. Salvation comes through a heart of belief on Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9-10; John 20:31; Acts 16:31

5. It has to go from the ears, to the mind, and to the heart; your inner man must trust on Christ, and Christ alone, to save you from your sins and give you eternal life.

Conclusion:

1. Did you know that some people will miss heaven by inches? The distance from the head to the heart.
2. Have you ever fully trusted Christ and His completed work? A changed life is the result of hearing, understanding, and believing the truth of Christ and His crosswork.
3. When you do, this babe of Bethlehem will change your life!