

The shepherds: Luke 2.8-20

Today's TFTD comes from Kate. Don't forget to go to our church website to experience the Advent Calendar online! You'll find a story, a song and a craft activity linked to today's TFTD. Just click on the link below:

<https://www.stphilipandstjames.co.uk/advent>

And you can listen at any time to an audio recording of Sunday's CAROL SERVICE: on the church website. Here is the link to the page.

<https://www.stphilipandstjames.co.uk/advent/christmas-services/>



If you had good news who would you tell first?

I remember the very first time my eldest sister told my parents of the exciting news of the birth of their first grandchild. And how thrilled and excited they were for the newly first-time parents. This exciting news was immediately shared among all the relatives and friends.

I believe this is true to say that for a lot of people, when something interesting and

exciting happens in life, it is natural for us to burst at the seams to tell someone about our news. Especially if our news was life-changing, we usually never get tired of telling others about it.

When God had the best news of the ages, to whom did God share this *Good News* in the first place? Did he choose the religious leaders, the wealthy folk or educated? Actually no. Instead He told the simple shepherds.

The Christmas story told in the Gospel of Luke reveals this interesting fact. The story takes us right from the manger to the fields nearby, where an angel appeared to terrified shepherds. Who wouldn't be if an angel and 'heavenly host' appeared where there had only been scrub brush moments before?

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger'" (Luke 2:10-12).

It didn't take long for the shepherds to pull themselves together after the heavenly beings have left. Knowing the "town of David" meant Bethlehem, the shepherds hurried there, and arrived in time to see Jesus in the stable. The Bible says after seeing the baby, "they spread the word concerning what had been told to them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them" (Luke 6:17-18).

This is a familiar and well-loved story. We treasure images of the nativity, and the humble nature of Christ's birth. And the life-changing revelation from the angels to the shepherds of Christ's birth.

It is humbling to learn that God choose to reveal such an incredible news to people on the fringes of society. Shepherds were the lowest rank of that society, the poorest of the poor. They had no education and they were ceremonially unclean so they were isolated from the rest of society.

It is encouraging to learn, God used an unpolished, unclean, and seemingly insignificant ragtag group of shepherds to share the greatest birth announcement in all of human history.

So we may wonder why did God choose the lowest people in society to hear the first *Good News*? The simple reason is that God has the authority, power and freedom to reveal himself to anyone of his choice.

And that is good news for us today. God is able to use anyone of us regardless of our

age or status. You don't have to have a degree to share Jesus Christ with your neighbour. You don't have to be fluent in ancient Greek and Hebrew in order to share a cup of cold water with someone who is thirsty in the name of Christ. God wants to use **you** right where you are. In fact, He could very well have positioned you to impact people's lives right within your own sphere of influence. In our everyday, ordinary, unremarkable lives, God can do something remarkable and extraordinary just like the shepherds to share His extraordinary and amazing message. Amen.

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