



Love in Action

Believe -- As soon as the angels left, the shepherds looked at each other and said: What are we waiting for? Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.

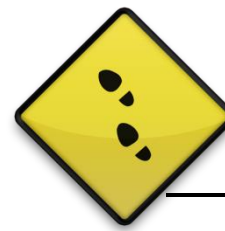
Faith means you say yes to all that God did through Christ. Yes, he is the Savior of the world. Yes, he came to die for my sins. Yes, through him I find forgiveness and new life. Yes, I want to follow Christ as Lord. Faith isn't a spectator sport; it's an active embracing of all that God has promised in Christ.

Obey -- The world loves to celebrate the birth of Christ, but they hate to obey him as the Lord of their lives. Everyone wants to keep Christ in the manger. But the manger is meaningless apart from the Cross. As one writer put it many years ago: "This little babe, so few days old, is come to rifle Satan's fold; all hell doth at his presence quake, though he himself for cold does shake." Christmas is a time for intentional change.

Tell -- Christmas trees, eggnog, and exchanging of gifts are fine, but if we do all that stuff but don't talk about Jesus—if we fail to speak of the real meaning of it all; if we neglect to tell someone that this child was born as Savior and Lord, that he was sent by God to die on the Cross to purchase with royal blood our own deliverance from sin, death, and the devil; if we neglect to publish that abroad, we've failed to understand Christmas.

The angel said that this is good news of great joy which shall be for all the people. Share the joy.

Experience -- How can you engage in holy wonder? Maybe that means you stop in the middle of your shopping, sit down, and read the Christmas story. Maybe that means you gather your children around a Nativity scene each night and unwrap a different piece and talk about the role it plays in the Christmas story. Maybe that means you wake up early one morning and find a place you can watch the sun rise as you meditate on [Luke 1:79](#).



Sermon Notes

TAKING ONE STEP CLOSER TO CHRIST

Captivated by Love

To attract and hold by charm, beauty, or excellence

▶ We're captivated by God's **Wisdom**

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6

How does God's plan guide your FUTURE?

▶ We're captivated by God's **Message**

"But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.'" Luke 2:15

What part of God's story brings you GREAT JOY?

▶ We're captivated by God's **Generosity**

"A Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke 2:11

What part of God's grace has affected you the most? Prodigal Son

Captivated by Love

Wonder – "But Mary treasured up all these things and **pondered** them in her heart." Luke 2:19

Worship – give credit where credit is due. Always!

Witness – We must become a story-telling community - telling others what God has done in for us in Christ and what He is doing in our lives.

NEW BEGINNINGS

Luke 2:1-20

¹ In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.

⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.