

Daily Discipleship

December 25, Christmas – Luke 2:1-20

An Attitude of Discipleship: *Joyful*

Focus Question: *How does being a disciple bring joy?*

word of life

“I bring you good news of great joy for all the people....” Luke 2:10 (NRSV)

Read Luke 2:1-20

1. *As you read the verses, listen for the attitudes of the characters in the story. What examples of discipleship do you hear?*

The Christmas story as recorded in Luke’s Gospel is one of the most familiar and beloved passages in the Bible. It is enacted by children in simple bathrobes and proclaimed by adults in festival choirs in myriad languages throughout the world. Since it is so familiar, you are invited to look at the text through the lens of discipleship. What insights on discipleship can be seen in this narrative?

God’s good news of great joy is timeless, yet rooted in time. The angel’s announcement to the shepherds was one of “good news of great joy for all the people.” (Luke 2:10 NRSV). Yet the events happened in a specific historical period – when Emperor Augustus decreed a census, and Quirinius was governor of Syria. These were rulers, but their reign was insignificant compared to the reign of God made manifest in the birth of Jesus. The meaning of this birth cannot be confined to one time, place, and people. It is good news for all. God continues to act in new and unexpected ways, using the common and ordinary to bring to fulfillment God’s promises.

2. *How have you experienced God working in unexpected ways?*

God’s good news of great joy cannot be contained. The sky that first Christmas night erupted with the dazzling song of the heavenly host, praising God. Their message inspired the shepherds to go and see; and upon seeing, they in turn “made known what had been told them.” (Luke 2:17). Good news cannot help but be shared.

3. *Think of examples when you couldn’t help but spread good news.*

God’s good news of great joy leads to reflection. As the shepherds told their good news story, Mary “treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19) The Greek verb used here could be translated “to discern the meaning.” Amazement at what was being told led to contemplation on what it all meant.

4. *Share an example of a time when you found yourself reflecting on the meaning of an event.*

God’s good news of great joy leads to praise. The shepherds returned to their shepherding, but with a different attitude. They were transformed from terrified hearers to joyful disciples, telling others what they experienced, glorifying and praising God. (Luke 2:20)

5. *What difference in attitude do you experience upon hearing good news?*
6. *What difference does the Christmas story make in your life?*

word among us

Maria was five years old and confident of the facts as she motioned excitedly for me to sit down beside her. “This is what happened,” she began. “The man and the woman were very poor, and they had to go a long way from home without a map. The lady was going to have a baby, but they forgot to make reservations. So they had to sleep in the barn with the animals. Shepherds came, but you couldn’t pet the sheep. Then the baby was born. And do you know who the baby was?” She paused, her big brown eyes opening wide with wonder. “The baby was God!” Then she jumped in the air, skipped a few steps, and ran outside in the front yard shouting, “Jesus is born! Jesus is born!”

It is sometimes said that “Christmas is for children.” Maybe that is true; we can learn much about being a disciple from a child like Maria and her joy-filled faith.

First, she knew the joy of telling the story, even though she knew that I had heard it before. But I had never heard the story told quite that way, through her eyes. The story came alive for me as it was joyfully lived out through her. I heard things I had never heard before. Disciples love to tell the story of Jesus and his love. And they tell the story as they have experienced it in their own lives.

1. *When do you tell the story of Jesus and his love?*

Maria also knew the joy of spreading the news. She couldn’t wait to tell the world the good news, “Jesus is born!” Although we might not express that joy in the same way, we are to spread the news of Jesus’ birth in our own way for the world to hear.

2. *Who around you needs to hear the joy of this story?*
3. *How might you share it with them?*

Most of all, Maria knew the attitude of joy. In her own unique way, she joined the angels’ song, “Glory to God in the highest!” Her announcement rang out with the shepherds’ voices, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen.

“The baby was God!” Christmas is for children because of one child, born in a simple stable to common, ordinary parents. Christmas is for children because in Christmas, God becomes a child. Christmas is for children because in the birth of this child, we are all made children of God.

JOY to the world, the Lord is come! JOY! JOY! For Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary.

4. *Imagine possible scenarios at your work or neighborhood where someone needs to have a message of joy. Role play ways to respond.*

Prayer

O Holy Child of Bethlehem, come to us and abide in us, that we might joyfully proclaim the good news of your birth. Amen

Dig Deeper

Isaiah 52:7-10



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Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

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last word

Every day this week,

share joy with someone.



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