

Character 6

THE SHEPHERDS

Scripture Passage: Luke 2:8-20

Attribute: A Faith That Acts

What can we as 21st century Christ-followers possibly learn from 1st century Hebrew Shepherds? The answer, as you might have guessed, is “plenty”!

I love the shepherds. They strike me as simple folks just going about their business. Working third shift. Hanging out under the stars. These guys were minding their business and their flocks, when the dark skies split open to reveal God’s holy welcoming committee.

Needless to say, these guys were seriously caught off guard.

The shepherds were presented with an amazing revelation. Look how the setting was described:

- “The glory of the Lord shone around them (vs. 9)”
- “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host (vs. 13)”
- “Praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased” (vs. 14). (*ESV*)”

God’s glory, the very glory of Heaven, surrounded them, flooding the Judean hillside! The shepherds found themselves face-to-face with a sight only a handful of people this side of Heaven had seen.

The question then became, “How would they respond?” How would they react to this supernatural display? Would they leave and go back to their homes? Would they stay right where they were sitting, bewildered at what they saw? Would they chalk it up to a hallucination, or some other supernatural occurrence? Would they be tempted to be awed by the experience and not heed the message?

Boy, we can relate to that last one, can’t we? In many of our churches, it’s easy to be moved by the sensory elements of our worship experience. But, sometimes our emotional response to the music, lights, and images can drown our desire to be affected by the message!

So, how did the shepherds respond? Moved by both the sensory experience *and* the power of the message, the shepherds set out on a journey. Their faith motivated their action. “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened.” Let’s put our eyes on this baby. Let’s stand in the midst of this great news. And so they went. And upon going they found that the message was true.

Their lives, and the world, would never be the same.

Food For Thought . . .

1. How would you describe the faith of the shepherds?
2. What are some modern day equivalents of this type of faith? How does an active faith look like in the world you live in?
3. This is a big question, but a good one to think about: How can you address (in your ministry context) the tendency by many students to NOT put their faith to practice in their lives? How can you address it? What are some of the factors you notice? What can you do to help students have a more active faith?
4. Where do you struggle with a faith that acts? What areas in your life do you find yourself not living as you should? What will it take for you to surrender those to God and allow the Spirit to lead you to a more active faith?