

Christmas Light: Luke 2:8-20

Get people to flash their torches or shake their lanterns.

Carols around the tree is more about doing something in the light than doing something in the dark. It's dark at night but we have lights so we can see each other and see what we are doing.

In the story we had just read, angels visited the shepherds and it was a pretty bright lights sort of episode! Have you ever been in bed and someone switches the light on. It can give you quite a surprise – even a shock can't it! That's what seeing the angels was to these shepherds.

The amazing thing was these were ordinary people. Why did God choose to first tell ordinary people like us that His Son was born? Because Jesus came as an ordinary person to tell people that God wanted to have something to do with everybody, not just people who were the rich and famous. And when he shone His light on these ordinary people, what a surprise it gave them!!

Police helicopters have searchlights – to shine light at the criminals so they can be caught. The shepherds were afraid – they thought that they had done something wrong! But the angel gave them God's good news - *This very day in David's town your Saviour was born--Christ the Lord!* And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." God had chosen them – ordinary people to reveal special news that was for everyone.

There's one sense in which the shepherds were right to be afraid – they knew something that every man and woman who has a real encounter with God realises – that they are not actually worthy to be in His presence.

We are all sinners – but the good news that God wanted to tell the shepherds was that He had decided to do something about it – by sending this special person – the Christ, the Messiah who was going to bless them and make them fit to be in His presence.

And that baby who was born Jesus, grew into a man and 30 years later he died on the cross for all the bad things (sins) we had done – he took the punishment so that God was able to forgive us so that we can know God personally and follow Jesus.

This message shines like a light in the darkness tonight – that God wants to know you and you and you -all of us and wants us to be with Him eternally.

How did the shepherds get to find Jesus – they listened to the message – but they did more than just listen and believe the angel – they did something – they went into Bethlehem and found the baby just as the angel said. They did something – they acted on what the angel said.

As God shines His light on us again tonight – don't just need to listen to His word but act on it. Trust Jesus as Saviour and Lord – accept Him into our life and follow Him.

So the message of Christmas shines out for another year? It comes to you and to me – what are we going to do with it?

Challenge & prayer.

8 There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, 10 but the angel said to them, "Don't be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. 11 This very day in David's town your Saviour was born--Christ the Lord! 12 And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." 13 Suddenly a great army of heaven's angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God: 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!" 15 When the angels went away from them back 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." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. 17 When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. 18 All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. 19 Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. 20 The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them.