



## The Shepherds

### WEEK 1 DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### OVERVIEW

In our first message of *Unexpected*, we are going to peer into the lives of the first group of people surrounding the birth of Christ that chose to walk by faith—the **shepherds**.

#### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Let's learn more about these shepherds in **Luke 2:8-20**: “Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.’ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men!’ So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.’ And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.”

#### 1. The shepherds had an unexpected visitation.

It's interesting to note that God chose to release the Good News of Jesus' birth to the shepherds first. He saw something in these men that stood out. He knew how they would respond—by faith.

- ❖ Referring to Luke 2:8-20 above, how did the shepherds reveal that they believed the angel's message?

## Responses to God's Speaking with Us

**Some doubt it.** The shepherds could have doubted their eyes, ears and senses.

**Some debate it.** The shepherds could have sat around the campfire debating the issue.

**Some deny it.** The shepherds could have rejected the angel's message.

- ❖ What do you think would have happened to the shepherds had they doubted, debated or denied? What would they have missed?

### 2. The shepherds responded in faith.

The journey of the shepherds began with a simple, immediate step of faith. They said, "Let's go," and they "hurried off." That's the right response when we hear from God.

- ❖ Describe a time when you heard from God and responded in faith.

### 3. The shepherds' faith response revealed their greater purpose in life.

Their faith led them out of a place of obscurity into a place of greatness. They became the first guests of the manger. They were experiencing first-hand the birth of Christ. God wanted to use their lives as a testimony—as an example.

#### A. The shepherds were an example for generations to come.

Because of how the shepherds responded, we can see how God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things. It is an inspiration of what God wants to do in our lives.

- ❖ Name someone who has inspired you by their faith. What have you learned from observing their life of faith?

#### B. The shepherds shared the Good News.

The wonder of seeing Christ was so great that the shepherds couldn't help telling everyone they came in contact with. They were vocal spokespeople for the birth of Christ and were used powerfully as messengers of the Good News that had come to earth.

- ❖ Who will you share the Good News with this Christmas season? Who can you invite to church?

## LIFE CHALLENGE

The message of Christmas is a message of **action**. For some, it may be the most basic and essential action—to give your life to Him. He wants your heart and life. He wants it so much that He sent His Son. Maybe you have kept faith on the fringe of your life. Maybe you are content to just give God a nod or a tip every now and again to keep in "good terms." God is calling you to action. How will you respond to Him today? Will it be in faith or fear, wonder or complacency?

## PRAYER REQUESTS & CLOSE IN PRAYER