

Warrington

"The Road to Bethlehem" 12/12/64

Scripture Lesson:- Luke 2:8-18.

Text:- Luke 2:- 15. "Let us now go even unto Bethlehem!"

Introduction:- What is Christmas going to be for us? A time when we take the road to Christmas, or a time when we take the road to Bethlehem? An observance, that adds burden to an already active and burdened type of life, or a shining experience when our faith is set glowing with a new vitality, and when our faith is set glowing with a new vitality and when once again we enter into a deep and rich experience in companionship with our Lord.

The one great question I think we need to ask ourselves just now, in this time of the year, "Will we keep Christ at the very center of our Christmas?"

John Wesley tells of the chaplain of the Prince of Denmark, that he was asked whether in all the rush and hustle of his activities he ever found time for a peaceful communion with God. The chaplain replied, "You ask if I ever find time in the midst of my busy life for the peace of God. I can assure you, sir, that I am never without it."

If somehow we can find that secret of being with God, even in the midst of the kind of life which we will be living in this very busy and active world of ours, then we have found the secret, not only of keeping Christmas year, but of keeping it Christian. We will have found a communion with Christ which sanctifies and gives meaning to everything that we do.

I. We feel at home with Shep

II.

The Reward of Faith.

We find that when they responded to that revelation in faith, when they ventured forth because God had spoken, they found the reward of faith. They found that God's promise is true. What God gives is authentic. What God promises shall be done. And the weakness of our lives and the frailty of our enterprise are constantly defeating the aggressive and eager grace of God who always is wanting to do more for us than we will permit Him to do. If we would only take Him at His word and trust his promises, then like the shepherds, we would find, "And then they went with haste and they found-they found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe, lying in a manger."

We rather feel at home with the shepherds as they take the road to Bethlehem; and more so, perhaps, than with the wise men with their high rank and lofty social status. When we meet the shepherds, they are about their daily work, and that is what we are doing day by day, keeping busy about our daily work. The shepherds were in the fields tending their sheep, which is what they had to do, because they were shepherds. But to these people about their daily work there came a divine glory and a divine splendor—the great announcement of glad tidings of joy to all the world because God has acted. God had provided for men's release from sin, and for the light to dispel the shadows of darkness, and a love that would strike a death blow to fear because God had come to this earth. And the news was brought first to these people doing their daily work.

The glory of the shepherds was that when their moment came, they responded. They heard that a Savior was born in Bethlehem, and they said to one another, "Let us go now even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which the Lord hath made known unto us." I am not asking you to take the road to Christmas; I know you will do that. I am asking you to take the road to Bethlehem, and with the shepherds pay homage and respect and honor to our glorious Savior and King.

III. What did the Shepherds Find

Not only did they find, but so great was the joy that welled up in their lives and in their minds and in their spirits, that they had to tell others about it. The good news could not be contained; it bubbled over. Good tidings had been announced to them; a wealth of news was theirs, and they had to share it with others. So when they had seen the Holy family, then they made known all and the saying that God had come to them concerning this Child. This was the Savior whose coming was good to all the world.

The commission has not come to an end. It is in full force today. If we have good news let us share it; and if we believe that Christ was born

In Bethlehem, let us tell it; if we are happy
in our faith, let others know it; and if we thin
that fellowship with Christ is a grand and glor-
ious thing, let make it known abroad that a Sav-
ior has come, and that we love him. This commis-
sion is ours as it was the shepherds. If we take
the road to Bethlehem with them, we will witness
to Christ.

IV.

What happened to the shepherds?

They did not become seers or priests or proph-
ets. They just remained shepherds. They went
back to their work. They went back to the com-
mon round. They went back to their duties and
responsibilities. But when they returned, every-
thing now was different because there was a
glory upon their lives. They returned "glorify-
ing and praising God". The shepherds are singing now;
they are shouting, they are happy. Their work
is no longer common ~~xxxxxxxx~~, for God has made
it uncommon with His presence, and with His good
news. They are praising God for all the things
that have been ~~xxxxxxxx~~ known to them.

We have to ask ourselves if we have had all
things made known to us so great and so glorious
that life becomes a continual pageant of praise
and of giving glory to God who has made known
to us such great things.

Conclusion: - If we go down the road to Beth-
lehem with the shepherds we will see the true
meaning of Christmas. We will be praising God and
saying, with the shepherds, "We have found
the Christ, the Son of God, who is the worlds
Savior and redeemer."