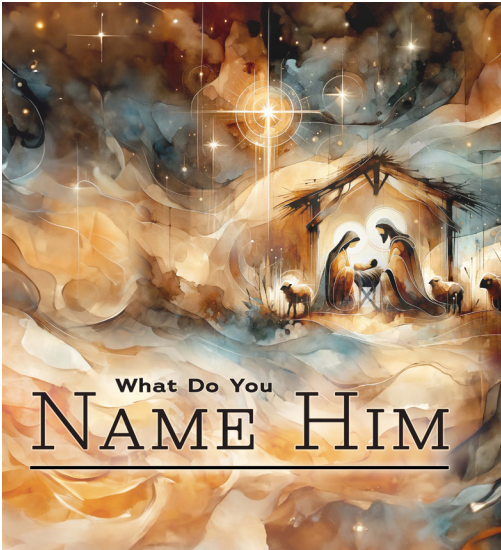


What Do You
NAME HIM

Sermon Growth Guide

January 5, 2025
We Name Him Jesus



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What Do You Name Him - We Name Him Jesus

Luke 2:15-21

Key Verse: When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child. Luke 2:17

Big Idea: Sharing Good News is a natural overflow for people who have seen God's glory.

Foundations

Our reading concludes with The Child receiving the name Jesus, which means "God Saves." The Savior has been born and his name is Jesus. It's one thing for Mary and Joseph to name their child Jesus. But what about us? What about you? Today we wrap up our Advent sermon series, "What do you Name Him?"

In our reading we find shepherds having another quiet and dark night. But their world flips upside down when the very glory of heaven fills the sky.

What do you do when you're interrupted? Do you lean in? Do you ignore? Do you go and investigate? Do you deny and dismiss? To be fair, yes, it depends on the situation. It also depends on your situational awareness. So let's stay with the situation in the text: the glory of God is revealed. What would you do?

Spend time this week moving through the text and helping one another see how responding to God's glory is relevant for you in this new year. What is God calling you into in this new season? Do you need to let go of anything? Develop a new habit? Respond to God's glory in a fresh way?

Finally, be bold in your prayers! Ask God that you each be given eyes to see the glory of God in your midst.

Understanding God's Word

Together, read Luke 2:15-21. Better yet, back up and read from verse one.

Try and put yourself in the scene as one of the shepherds. What stands out the most?

Describe the correlation between verses 12 and 16.

What is a sign? What signs have been given to humanity regarding God's presence and power?

Applying God's Word

Sharing Good News is a natural overflow for people who have seen God's glory.

How might you cultivate eyes to see God's glory even more this year? What new rhythm or discipline might you build into your life that would help you be mindful of God's glory around you?

Witnessing God's Word

Remember our church's challenge question to our Share Good News value, "Are you invested in someone else knowing Jesus?" Who can you become better friends with this year who needs Jesus in their life, but who doesn't have a relationship with Jesus today? What's your next step?

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What compels someone to open their life to someone else? To be truly sacrificially loving to their neighbor? To move toward someone in hopes that that person finds and follows Jesus? To seek the truest good for neighbor? Our reading today is from Luke 2 and follows the shepherds the night Jesus is born. At first, I wasn't sure how I would relate to first century shepherds. But it's not so much their shepherding we need to relate to, it's their response to the glory of God. And here's the thought for today: like the shepherds, we too have seen the glory of God. Sharing Good News is a natural overflow for people who have seen God's glory.

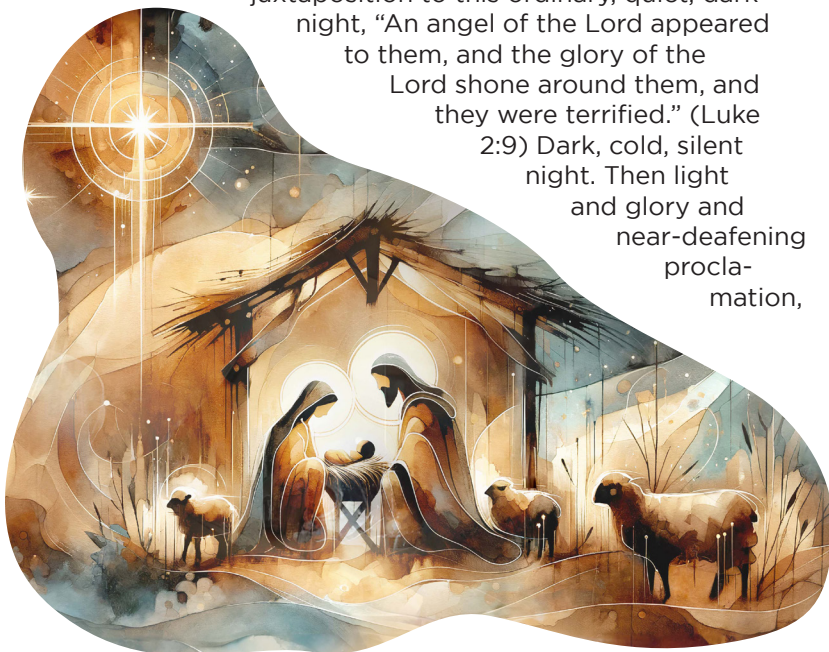
Our reading concludes with the child receiving the name Jesus, which means "God Saves." The Savior has been born and his name is Jesus. It's one thing for Mary and Joseph to name their child Jesus. But what about us? What about you? Today we conclude our Advent sermon series, "What do you Name Him?" We've referenced Jesus' question to his disciples already. To me, it's a bit of a haunting question, in the sense that it is surely one of the greatest questions humans are given to answer.

At my previous church our music director, Mary, had a large, framed art piece hanging right in your face when you stepped into her office that read, "Who do you say I am?" If Jesus really is who he claimed to be, the Son of God - if the Bible really is God's Word to us - if allegiance to Jesus and His Kingdom really is needed for salvation, then I don't know if there is a more important question than Jesus' question that extends to you and me today, "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" (Matthew 16:15)

Our reading today begins with the disappearance of the glory of God. Earlier in Luke 2 there are shepherds gathered together in darkness. "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night." (Luke 2:8) Nothing unusual. Another night with the sheep. "Keeping watch." Maybe awake.

Maybe asleep. Shepherds. And then in absolute juxtaposition to this ordinary, quiet, dark night, "An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified." (Luke 2:9) Dark, cold, silent night. Then light

and glory and near-deafening proclamation,



"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." (Luke 2:13-14) After hundreds, after thousands of nights of the same after the same after the same, now this.... The great interruption. Salvation is at hand: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:11)

What do you do when you're interrupted? Do you lean in? Do you ignore? Do you go and investigate? Do you deny and dismiss? To be fair, yes, it depends on the situation. It also depends on your situational awareness. Staying with the situation in the text, the glory of God is revealed, what would you do?

In our passage, the shepherds demonstrate a three-part pattern: they go, they share, they worship. I will walk us through this three-part discipleship process, and then I'll circle back and go deeper into application on the middle of the process, Sharing Good News.

First, the shepherds go investigate, "When the angels had left them and gone 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 about." (Luke 2:15). They go. If you've heard something about God, go check it out! Skeptics welcome! At First Pres, your questions are welcome, bring them with you, find answers. Get into the right circles having the right conversations that you need to wrestle with in order to say yes to Jesus. God loves you and God loves your questions. Isaiah 1:18a, "Come now, let us reason together, says the Lord," (ESV).

The angel told the shepherds, "This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Luke 2:12) God gives signs as a grace to you, to confirm in your heart that Jesus is Lord. The shepherds were told there would be a baby in a manger. Did you know you're given signs, too? How about the majesty of creation? The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. (Psalm 19:1-4) Theologians call this general revelation. Consider the heavens, the earth, the human body, sacrificial love,

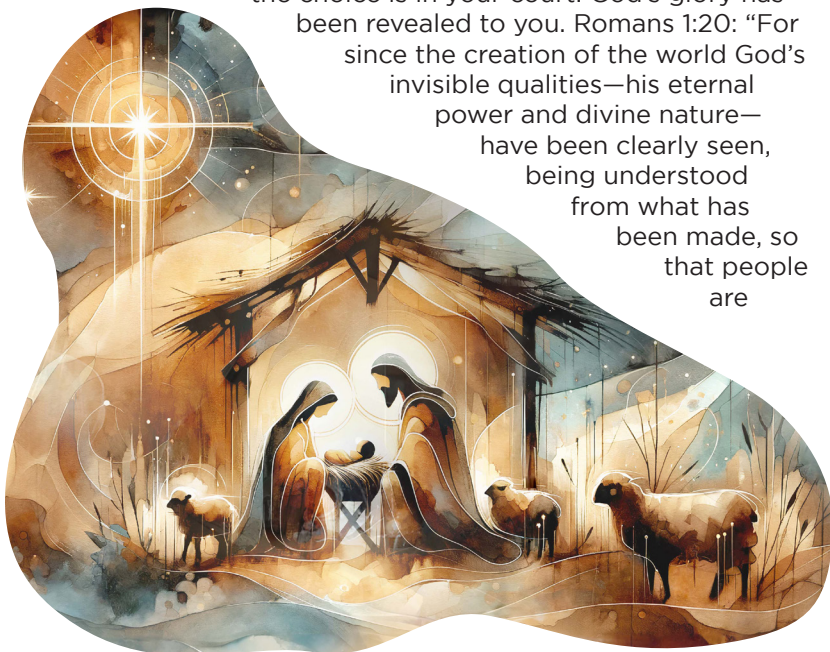
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the entire cosmos. Put it all together and ask yourself, in earnest, if an intelligent and kind and Personal Creator is at the foundation, or some variation of time and chance and matter (and be honest about your belief of how the original matter got where it did). What I hope your mind and your heart come to know is that Jesus Christ alone is the Unmoved Mover, the Infinite Reference Point, the first and eternal link in the chain, your Loving Creator. Holding the majesty of God in your heart is a beautiful thing, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)

After the shepherds went, they Shared Good News. Number 2, Share Good News. Verses 17 and 18: “When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.” The angel revealed God’s glory on that hillside of sheep and shepherd, and then the angel gave a sign, “You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:12) And here’s our Big Idea today, “Sharing Good News is a natural overflow for people who have seen God’s glory.” Light broke into a dark night. Angels told shepherds to trade their cold fear for endless joy. A sign was issued and fulfilled. Sure enough, the shepherds found a baby, in a manger of all places.

Some years ago, I stayed with a family in rural Kenya for three months. The property had several homes made of mud and stick and straw and several semi-permanent tents. At night the livestock were brought in close and one of the shepherds would “keep watch by night.” A little humorous, every time I got up at night, you know, to stretch my legs, this dear friend, dear shepherd, was sound, sound, sound asleep. I’m still convinced I would have heard the lion first. I only mean to say it’s not a given that you and me get up and go to Bethlehem. We have choices to make. What choice do you make?

The shepherds could have stayed on their hillside. You can choose to stay on your hillside. But the choice is in your court. God’s glory has been revealed to you. Romans 1:20: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are



without excuse.” People are without excuse. God’s glory is manifest across the whole earth. Yet so many people stay on their hillsides and fall back asleep.

You have a choice to make. In life you’re confronted with news and announcements, glory and proclamation. But the news and the announcements mean very little set next to what you do with the news, what you do with the announcements. For you, even God coming to earth to save you from your sin is of little importance set next to what you personally do with the knowledge of that reality. Today, We Name Him Jesus. Today, will you declare in your heart that Jesus is Lord? Today, will you look at your life and see the glory of it all? The sunrise and the sunset, Pike’s Peak wrapped in snow and the baby wrapped in cloths. Will you look at the joys around you and the sorrows around you and affirm that to Jesus alone belongs the power and glory and honor and the worship? Will you listen to your life and Name Him Jesus? Can you imagine being one of the shepherds? Day after day after day after day, and now, like a sunrise that skips the breaking of dawn, light has pierced the darkness and God’s glory has been made manifest.

First the shepherds go and investigate, then they Share Good News, now they worship. “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” (Luke 2:20) Worship is an overflow of the heart. The shepherds didn’t march off to the temple to worship. The shepherds returned to their post, stumbled and tripped across a once again dark earth to a cold hillside, “glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.” The earth was cold and dark again, but the Light and Life of Jesus was kindled and burning hot and bright in their hearts.

As you are going, worship the Lord. As you drive down the highway, praise God. Let your day start with the alleluia of God’s grace upholding you and end with the amen of the presence of Jesus surrounding you. Let the hours of your life be filled with genuine heart-response worship to seeing the glory of God in your midst. The Savior has been born! The shepherds, in just a few verses, model a discipleship process: Go, Share, Worship. Earlier I mentioned working with my former worship director, Mary. The first thing you saw

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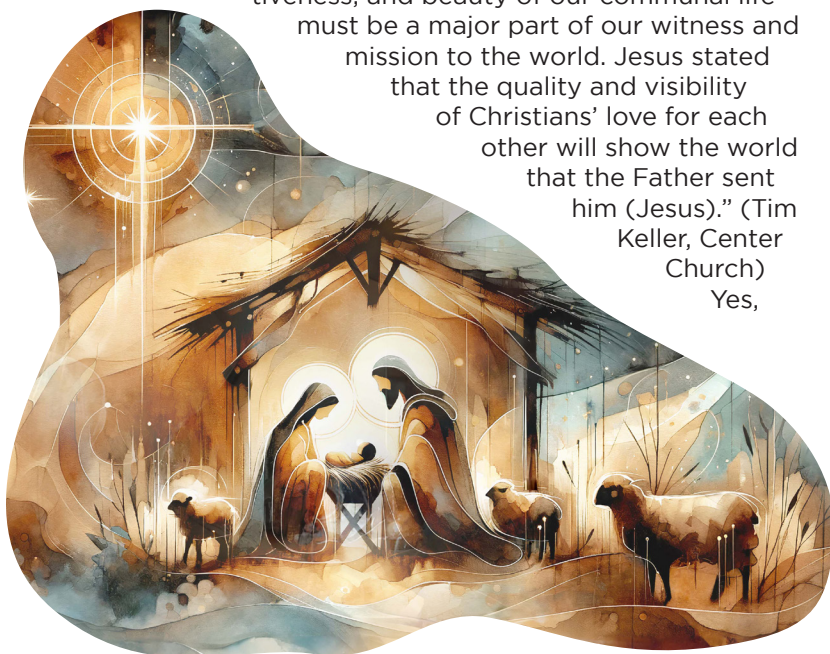
when you entered her office was this large art piece that read, “Who do you say I am?” Mary modeled this shepherd-process. Go, Share, Worship. Her whole life revolved around being captivated by the glory of God. Mary answered Jesus’ question in step with Peter, “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” (Matthew 16:15-16) Mary and her husband, Bo, adopted three beautiful daughters from China. Wouldn’t you agree that what someone says when they know their time is short is something they really believe in? Even with Mary’s terminal cancer diagnosis, Mary’s answer to The Great Question never changed. The church office was very quiet when the ambulance arrived. I think I was the only one there other than Mary and the paramedics. My final moment with Mary was her grabbing my arm from the stretcher, “never stop telling the world who He is.” Mary knew His name.

His name is Jesus and He is glorious! His kingdom is glorious and without end and without contestation. “Sharing Good News is a natural overflow for people who have seen God’s glory.” I promised you earlier that I would offer a couple points of application around Sharing Good News.

First, stay close to Jesus. We’re in a New Year. What do you need to do to stay closer to Jesus? Sharing Good News is a natural overflow for people who have seen God’s glory, so cultivate your relationship with Jesus. Therein you’ll see God’s glory and you won’t be able to help yourself. Like Mary, you’ll tell the world. You’ll share good news.

Second, build real, deep friendships with people who don’t know Jesus yet. Remember our church’s challenge question to our Share Good News value, “Are you invested in someone else knowing Jesus?” Meet real needs. Keep the relationship authentic while authentically looking for ways to bring Jesus into the conversation. Open your life and be the friend someone needs to find and follow Jesus.

Third, love one another. Right here at First Pres, love one another. Jesus says, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:35) Tim Keller writes, “The quality, distinctiveness, and beauty of our communal life must be a major part of our witness and mission to the world. Jesus stated that the quality and visibility of Christians’ love for each other will show the world that the Father sent him (Jesus).” (Tim Keller, Center Church) Yes,



loving one another is a way to Share Good News, to reveal God’s glory. When a visitor comes into our midst, they should recognize immediately that we are a different kind of people. We’ve seen the glory of God! We’re different now. John Stott writes, “The followers of Jesus are to be different, different from both the nominal church and the secular world, different from both the religious and the irreligious.” We must be known for our love for one another, not just in your Life Group, but in the hallways, in the Plaza, even in the parking lot! Don’t just respond to God’s glory right now in a worship service, ask God’s Spirit to help you respond to God’s glory each and every moment of your life.

Remember the Alpha video? What strikes me are the choices people are actively making to open their lives to others, to love the people around them. Like the shepherds, we have choices to make, too. And if you don’t remember anything from today’s sermon, remember this, Sharing Good News is a natural overflow for people who have seen God’s glory. And you, dear friends, have seen God’s glory! Let’s Pray. Father, as we move from your Word to your table, bring to bear on our minds when you have revealed your glory to us. In your mercy, continue to show us your glory. Like the shepherds seeing the angels, like Elisha seeing chariots of fire, give us eyes to see your kingdom at hand. Warm our hearts with your presence. Father, we name your Son Jesus, the Savior of the world. Send us out in your power to share the love of Jesus abundantly, endlessly. Amen.