***Luke 2:8-10 Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. 10Then 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.***

As hard as it is to believe, we are entering the Christmas Season. Next week, we will start Advent. Advent relates to the coming of Jesus. The First Advent was focused on a perfect atoning sacrifice for sin in the form of Jesus. The Second Advent we wait in excitement for Him to come again, not as Babe, but as Conquering King. We remember the First Advent, but we long for the Second Advent. This Christmas season, let’s share this hope with others, that they too may be ready at Christ’s appearing.

Verse 8 says *Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.* Of course, we know that Mary understands that she will bear the Messiah and Joseph, having been warned in a dream, understands that Jesus is the Son of God. We know that Elizabeth called Mary the mother of her Lord, and Zacharias was told by the angel Gabriel that John would go before Jesus in the spirit of Elijah. Now, we find ourselves in a field with shepherds, watching flocks by night. We mustn’t let it be lost on us that God started with shepherds and He continues with shepherds. Abraham was a shepherd, Jacob – a shepherd, Moses – a shepherd, David – a shepherd. Here, though shepherds were of a very low esteem at this time Israel, so low in fact that courts didn’t recognize shepherds as a credible witness in legal matters, God chooses them as His first public witnesses to the coming of Jesus. History records that the religious elite wouldn’t keep company with heathen or shepherds. They were despised. And, unto this lowly and humble group, this well beloved by God group, comes the greatest public announcement to have ever taken place. Christ our Savior is born.

And God still uses the humble today. The Bible tells us that He resists the proud! The humble servant of God often feels unqualified, wondering why in the world God would use him, use her to teach or reach a family member or lead an activity or speak in public for Him. No doubt these shepherds, abiding in a field, looking up in amazement, looking inside with wonder, feel the same. God started His Covenant with shepherds and now God is continuing His covenant with shepherds. We too are called to shepherd – to tend to the people God has placed in our lives – to abide in the fields white unto the harvest and keep watch. In John 9:5, Jesus said - *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* My friends, we are in the night watch, but we are watching expectantly for the breaking of the Day, for the coming of the Bright and Morning Star, as Jesus calls Himself in Revelations 22 – Surely, He is coming quickly. Will He find us watching?

Verses 9 *And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.* The KJV says – lo the angel of the Lord came upon them. The Greek has the idea of a sudden appearance. And the glory shone round about them. Bright, dazzling glory – like the glory of God as He led the children of Israel in the desert, like the glory of Jesus at the transfiguration. And these simple shepherds were greatly afraid.

And the angel speaks. Verse 10 - *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.* The angel didn’t bring dread, but good tidings of great joy! The Gospel of Christ has arrived. This will prove to be the best tidings of the greatest joy to all people. Christ will open a Way to Heaven. That’s the best news ever… it was the best news that night, standing in a field, with the glory of the Lord illuminating them.

And my friends… it is the very best news of greatest joy to all that are lost and suffering in this world today. All the sheep wandering, lost and without a shepherd, at the mercy of the predator of this world, seeking whom he might destroy. But we must be about the work of our father, in this dark time. We, the humble, standing and looking up, must be about spreading the good tidings of great joy, which is Jesus Christ the Lord. Even in the darkest of watches, we must guide those God has entrusted to us. In due time, the night will be over. In due time, the Bright and Morning Star will reappear. It may be today or a thousand years from today. Regardless, when the Master returns, let Him find us abiding in the fields, keeping watch by night, doing our work, and waiting for Him.

This week, let’s prepare our hearts for the Advent Season. Let’s shift our focus from the distractions of this world and look for the coming of our Savior. He is the Bright and Morning Star and He is coming again. Will He find us distracted or ready, watching, and waiting?