

The Unexpected Messenger

Read Luke 2:8-20.

This familiar story of the shepherds reminds us that God uses unexpected messengers. Think about the shepherds for a moment. In their day, they were considered unclean. They spent their time living outside with smelly animals. To get a feel for how the shepherd fit in his society, try to get a picture in your mind of the lowest workman type in our society, a garbage man perhaps. Not exactly an appreciated profession. Try to picture someone really dirty and smelly. Is this the person to whom you expect God to reveal a great wonder? Is this the person you would expect would teach you about God? Yet the message of the coming of the Savior was entrusted to shepherds – the lowly men of that day. And these shepherds **“made known what had been told them about this child; and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them (17-18).”**

The long-expected Messiah, the Christ child had come into the world in an unexpected place, a stable, and the message had been entrusted to unexpected messengers. I can't help but wonder how many people did not see the Christ child for what he was. How many people turned away; how many people ignored the shepherds? How many of us would have listened to these shepherds? How many times have we failed to see our Lord Jesus Christ showing through other people?

In order to see the Messiah, the shepherds had to **go** to the child. Often we too will see Him when we “go” by performing small acts of service. At Sunday school, a friend told of a time she reluctantly called on a woman who was lonely but hard to visit. The neighbor was usually dirty and she “had the mind of a child.” Our friend forced herself to go visit and took with her a batch of rolls she'd made. The neighbor asked, “May I see your hands?” Puzzled my friend held out her hands. The lady replied, “I just want to kiss the hands that made these rolls for me.” There with her simple act, this child-like lady had shown my friend what unconditional love is like. “I think of her when I think of the Christ child,” says our friend.

1. Have you ever seen Christ in an unexpected place or person?
2. What act of kindness can you perform today that might give you a chance to see Christ in someone else or to be Christ's unexpected messenger?
3. How does OMP or other mission work give us the chance to be or to meet unexpected messengers?