

**Sonoraville Baptist Church**  
**Sunday, December 11, 2011 – 11:00 AM**  
**Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor**

**The After Christmas Sale - Luke 2:8-20**

**Introduction:** If you're like most people nowadays, you like finding a good sale. This is especially true at Christmas because none of us want to pay retail for all those presents we buy, do we? We want the half-price sales, the buy-one-get-one-free sales, the no-shipping fee sales, the pre-Christmas sales, and the after-Christmas sales. Yeah, that's what Christmas is all about isn't it? We like getting next year's wrapping paper, ornaments, and artificial Christmas trees for next to nothing. And we like saving money while we're spending money so we can have more money to use buying presents during all those money-saving sales!

I bring all this because in the past couple of weeks, we've talked about what it takes to get ready for the big day of Christmas. We've talked about some things we can learn from Mary, one of the main characters of that first Christmas story. But this morning, I want us to think about what happens after Christmas. Let's think about Christmas beyond all the buying – beyond the rush – beyond all the sights and sounds that are generated during the season, and even beyond what God was doing before that first Christmas. I want to start by looking into the Scriptures to see what happened after that first Christmas.

<sup>8</sup> *And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." <sup>15</sup> 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." <sup>16</sup> So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> 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 2:8-20 (NIV)***

One thought that jumps out from this part of the Christmas story that I want us to think about today is this: Nearly two thousand years ago peace and joy came after Christmas.

We tend to put almost all our effort and all our energy into Christmas day ... the getting of gifts. But what happens after all the gifts have been opened and there's nothing under the tree? Sometimes, it all seems so anticlimactic, to say the least. Christmas is over for another year, so we move on to other things.

Oh I know we enjoy our gifts for a while, but let's face it, as soon as the big day is over, we begin to think about packing up Christmas for another year. We start thinking about going back to work and school and everything else that is fairly normal to us.

Yes, in that first Christmas there was a lot of preparation and drama that led up to the big event, but the event itself was far from anticlimactic. In that first Christmas, God wrapped up His gift, His Son, and laid Him in a manger. Then He told some people - a bunch of ragged tagged shepherds to come and see the gift He gave to the world, and what did they do? Did they go home to business as usual? Did they just forget about it as if it meant nothing to them? No! The shepherds went out and announced to anyone who would listen, the "after Christmas sale."

Let's read vs. 17-20 again. <sup>17</sup> *When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> 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 2:17-20 (NIV)***

The after Christmas sale the shepherds announced speaks of three things I want us to consider today. First, it speaks of:

**1. Treasuring** - A treasure is something that is of great value and worth. The Scriptures speak of God

treasuring His people. He said in **Deuteronomy 7:6 (NIV)**, “*For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession.*” Peter wrote of the church in **1 Peter 2:9 (NIV)**, and spoke of how God views us. He said, “*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*”

The scriptures also tell us of some of the treasures gained during that first Christmas that are still around to share today. The wise men opened up their treasures and presented them to Christ. Mary, the mother of Jesus, treasured all the things that happened on Christmas and thought about them the rest of her life.

I have to believe the shepherds also thought of the message given to them by the angels, and also their coming to view the Messiah as a moment of truth to be treasured for the rest of their lives. It was more than a sentimental moment, but a God-moment where the reality of eternity permeated their hearts and lives.

What we can gain from this is that we are not to so much treasure the season of Christmas, but rather treasure the Savior of the Christmas season. Treasure Christ. Discover and find the value of the message of His life and work. That way, you won't be as prone to store up treasures in this world, but store up treasures in heaven that will last forever. Next the after Christmas sale the shepherds announced speaks of:

**2. Telling** - After that first Christmas, the shepherds began telling others what had been told to them. The angel told them: “*Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.*” **Luke 2:10-11 (NIV)** This is what the shepherds began telling everyone. How could they not?

I've had the privilege over the years to tell this wonderful story of good news. Now, I haven't told it near as much as I should have, but when I have, and it has been received with great joy, It's amazing how the story gets multiplied. Over my 33 years of ministry, some of those people who have heard the good news of Christ are now telling that same story as teachers, as missionaries, as preachers, as seminary and college professors, and as Christians working and living in dark places all over the world.

Pride is not my aim in telling you that. Glory to God is! He gets the glory when we tell the good news of His love and mercy and grace. He gets the glory when someone comes to believe in Him in faith and receives His forgiveness and becomes a child of God. My prayer is that we would all be as the shepherds were after that first Christmas. May we constantly be telling the good news about Jesus, and how He can be the treasure of their lives. Finally, the after-Christmas sale of the shepherds speaks of:

**3. Returning** - As I began to look at what the shepherds did after that first Christmas, I thought, “*You know, they should have been asked by the Bethlehem Baptist Convention to go on a speaking tour. They should have written a book about what really happened entitled, “The Shepherds Guide to Christmas”*”

But none of those things happened. In fact, the truth is, the shepherds went back to work. They went back to keeping sheep in the fields. **Luke 2:20 (NIV)** says, “*The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*”

Now did you catch that? They went back to work, but they went back different than when they came! They went back with hearts full of the glory of Christ and their mouths filled with praise.

I wonder, after this Christmas, will we be any different that when we came in to it? Will we return to our jobs or our schools, or our families – all the normal things of life any different?

John Piper said, “*God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.*” And “*Treasuring Christ is something we spread to others ... as the all-satisfying Treasure of life.*”

Yes, after Christmas, we will go back to our ordinary lives, but may we realize that God is with us in our ordinary lives. And because of that, it's my prayer that we all return to our ordinary lives with a changed heart – a thankful heart, a heart that is full of treasures that we just can't wait to share. The shepherds realized that and so should we.

**Conclusion:** Someone has said, “*It is not so much where you live but how you live; and as you live, to the world your highest give.*” The highest good we can give is Christ. He is who we should be offering in our after Christmas sale, because only He can bring peace and joy to the world. May we go and make Jesus look good by treasuring Him, telling others about Him, and returning with Him into our everyday lives!