

The Light Has Dawned – Part 2

Light for Those Who Live in Darkness – Luke 2:8-18

Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – December 7, 2025

Introduction

- When Luke tells us that the first Christmas happened at night, he's not giving us a meaningless detail; he's making a theological point. Scripture often uses night as a picture of the world without God's rescue, which is composed of spiritual blindness, brokenness, sin, and fear. The very setting of Bethlehem's fields—cold, quiet, dark—mirrors the spiritual landscape of humanity.
- Into this night, "a light has dawned." This light is not a spark from our own goodness. It is not the glow of positive thinking. It is not the flicker of human progress. This is a light from outside us. A light we cannot produce. A light we desperately need.
- In Luke 2:8-14, God pulls back the curtain and shows us what Christmas truly is: the invasion of heaven into earth, light dawning upon those who sat in darkness. If you know your Bible, this story is familiar to us. Joseph and Mary were visited by an angel who announced that a child would be born to them, not by their own doing, but by the Spirit of God. They were to call His name "Jesus." He would be great and be called "the Son of the Most High." To this child, "The Lord God will give Him the throne of His Father David, and He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end" (Luke 1:26-38).
- This was THE announcement, the one they had been personally and collectively longing and waiting to hear. This announcement first came to Mary, a humble woman, far away from the lights of the city, a woman living in the shadows, for whom the light had dawned. On hearing this news, Mary composed a song glorifying God for His goodness to her, His promise-keeping fulfillment to Abraham, and to all His people (Luke 1:46-55).
- God, using the circumstances of the time, drove Joseph and Mary to the town that was prophesied long before, the place where the Savior would be born, to Bethlehem (Micah 5:2-5). And "while they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them" (Luke 2:6-7).
- Now we come to our passage for this morning, Luke 2:8-14 (page 880), where the angels widen the circle of light by announcing the arrival of the One they have been waiting for.

Luke 2:8-14 NIV

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

- This is the dawn of redeeming light. I want to draw our attention to three truths that break through our darkness in this passage:
 - God's Light Breaks in Where We Least Expect

- God's Light Reveals Our Savior, Not Our Strength
- God's Light Produces Peace Where Fear Once Reigned

God's Light Breaks in Where We Least Expect

- If I were scripting the arrival of the Messiah, I wouldn't start with shepherds. Shepherds were not powerful, influential, affluent, or educated people at the center of society; they were rough, untrustworthy, unimpressive, lower-class men on the margins of society. Shepherds were among the socially low and religiously marginalized of the ancient world, not considered people of influence or importance. But that's precisely who God chose.
- The light of His glory dawned first on those living on the outskirts, not in palaces or on places of note. It first shone on nobodies, not nobility. Why? Because God delights to bring His light to the places and people who know they need it, to where it is most welcome and needed.
- This is the good news of Christmas: You do not need to qualify yourself for grace. Grace comes to you. To the exhausted parent, the grieving heart, the sinner weighed down by guilt, the anxious soul who wonders if God has turned His face away, Christmas announces: He breaks into your night.
 - Sometimes our darkness is because of our own choices.
 - Sometimes it's the pain of living in a broken world.
 - Sometimes it's suffering laid upon us.
- But the pattern of Scripture is clear: God's light seeks people sitting in darkness, not those who pretend the sun is already shining. The shepherds had no credentials. No merit. No résumé. No worthiness. And yet, "the glory of the Lord shone around them." That's the gospel. And the light breaks in where we least expect it. This gives us hope as we see the goodness of God shone in the face of Christ, who is our Savior.

God's Light Reveals Our Savior, Not Our Strength

- Notice the angel's announcement: "**Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you**" (v. 11). Not a moral coach. Not a political liberator. Not an inspirational leader. A Savior.
 - Because our deepest problem isn't weakness; it's sin.
 - Our greatest enemy isn't the government; it's death.
 - Our deepest need isn't better circumstances; it's reconciliation with God.
- And the One given is Christ the Lord, the promised Messiah, the divine King Himself. God did not send an army. He did not send a motivational video. He did not send a million dollars. He sent a Savior. He came in person.
- This means that Christianity is not a self-improvement program; it is a rescue. Salvation is not advice; it is deliverance. Jesus did not come to tell you how to save yourself; He came to save you. If Christmas tells us anything, it's that humanity cannot climb up to God, so God came down to us. We can't produce our own light; we live in darkness, and the dawn must shine on us from somewhere else. It is beyond us, and above us, to rescue us from the darkness.
- The light that shines is the "light of life." John describes Jesus by saying, "**In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it**" (John 1:4-5).
- Just down the road, the life and light of the world lay in a manger. And in the manger lies the One who will go to the cross. In the cloth that wraps the infant is the shadow of the cloth that

will wrap His lifeless body. In His birth, we see the beginning of God's mission to redeem sinners.

- Light breaks into the darkness not by revealing how we fix ourselves, but by revealing a Savior who will carry our sin, die in our place, rise in power, and give us eternal life. So this Advent, resist the pull to think Christianity is mainly about being "better." It is first about being rescued. We don't have the strength to rescue ourselves; we are the ones in darkness. We are the ones who are to see this great light. We are the ones in whom the light has dawned to rescue us from our sin and death. He is the One in whom we are to cry aloud "**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests**" (v. 14).

God's Light Produces Peace Where Fear Once Reigned

- The shepherds' first response when the angel appeared to them was terror. "**An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified**" (v. 9). I am sure we would have been as well. There is a terror that comes from something unexpected or supernatural. I am guessing that this "terror" was not just because they were alarmed, but because they were exposed.
- That makes sense. God's glory exposes us. When the fullness of His holiness shines, we know instantly: He's God. And I'm not. He is holy, and I am not. He is glorious, and I am not. He is powerful and beyond, and we are weak and of earth.
- But then comes the gospel: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people" (v. 10). The announcement does not scold them; it comforts them. Why? Because the coming of Christ is not God's judgment breaking in, it is God's peace breaking in. To this, a heavenly choir of angels sing "**Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace . . . on whom His favor rests**" (v.14). This is not "church world" language, it is an announcement to the whole world. It is the declaration to all people in all places that peace with God has come through Christ. True peace isn't merely emotional calm. It's not circumstantial deliverance or a motivational quote. It's not shallow positivity. It is a restored relationship with the God who made us and who will remake us and remake all things good.
- This Christmas peace is rooted in the Son who took our sin, the Lamb who bore our judgment, and the King who reigns forever. That peace doesn't float above real life; it enters our fears, grief, marriage tensions, uncertain futures, strained relationships, financial problems, time constraints, and regrets. This Christmas peace tells us it will all be good in the end. It tells us that if you belong to Christ, God is not against you. He is with you. He is for you. He delights in you because of Jesus. That is light strong enough to steady any dark night of the soul.

So How Do We Respond?

1. *Come into the Light.* Some of us are still hiding: hiding sin, hiding shame, hiding fear, hiding from God. Christmas invites us to step out of the shadows into the grace of the Savior. Jesus did not come to expose you in order to condemn you; He came to forgive you. Bring your darkness to Him. Confess your sin. Lay down your self-salvation strategies. Receive His grace and let His mercy wash you clean.
2. *Carry the Light.* The shepherds didn't keep the news to themselves. They told everyone. Here is the rest of the story:

Luke 2:15-18 (NIV)

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.”

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

When the light of Christ breaks in, it must go out. God’s light first comes to us and then goes out through us. We become messengers of the good news that brings great joy. It must go out into your home, your neighborhood, your workplace, your school. Let the grace, humility, hope, and courage of Christ shine in you and through you. Not with arrogance, but with gentleness. Not with pride, but with joy. People are starving for hope. We carry the news that hope Himself has come.

3. *Worship the One who Came.* When the angels explode in praise, it is the right response: “Glory to God in the highest.” Christmas is the cosmic announcement that God keeps His promises, saves His people, and reigns forever. So, worship with wonder, with gratitude, with reverence, with joy. Let Advent be more than anticipation or tradition. Let it be kneeling at the manger in awe of the Savior who took on flesh to redeem us.

Conclusion

- The Light has dawned. In Bethlehem’s fields, on an ordinary night, God broke into the dark and announced salvation to the world. That same light shines today. Into your pain. Into your uncertainty. Into your sin. Into your waiting.
- Christmas tells us the world is not abandoned. God has come near. Grace has been revealed. Light has dawned.
- The angel’s announcement still rings out: “Fear not. I bring you good news of great joy.” It is for the broken. It is for the weary. It is for all who know the night. A Savior has come. Christ the Lord. Peace from heaven. Glory on earth. And that changes everything.

Our prayer team is available to pray with you after the service, near the “prayer” sign at the front of the sanctuary, and also in the prayer room, located next to the offices.

Also, you can send your prayer request to prayer@crosspointrockford.com

Questions for Growth Groups

1. In the sermon, we heard that God’s light breaks in “where we least expect.” Where have you personally experienced God’s presence, help, conviction, or comfort in an unexpected place, time, or situation? What impact did that have on your faith?
2. The shepherds had no credentials, status, or spiritual résumé, yet the glory of the Lord shone around them. What does this reveal about God’s heart toward ordinary, overlooked, or broken people? How should this shape the way we relate to others inside and outside the church?
3. The angel did not announce a helper, advisor, or teacher, but “a Savior.” What are some subtle ways we slide into self-salvation efforts in daily life (trying to fix ourselves, carry guilt alone, or prove our worth)? How does the identity of Jesus as Savior correct that?
4. The message of Christmas reminds us that our core need is not improved circumstances but reconciliation with God. How do you see this tension in your own prayer life, expectations, or

spiritual habits? Where are you tempted to ask God to change your situation more than your heart?

5. When the shepherds encountered God's glory, their first response was fear. Why do you think God's holiness can feel threatening, and how does the gospel speak peace into that fear?
6. The shepherds hurried to see Christ and then "spread the word." Who has God put in your life that might be sitting in darkness and needs the news of this Savior? What simple step could you take this Advent to shine His light?
7. We were invited to "Come into the Light," "Carry the Light," and "Worship the One who Came." Which of these three responses most resonated with you and why? What would obedience look like for you this week?