

The Gift of Myrrh

The Three Gifts #3 - Pastor Gary Combs - December 22, 2024 - Luke 2:1-20

Children's sermon (*Invite children to sit on steps. Read Luke 2. Do the "Legend of the Candy Cane"*)

Read: Luke 2:1-20 (ESV) ¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ⁸And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" ¹⁵When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." ¹⁶And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Sermon - INTRO: Today, we're concluding our series called, "The Three Gifts." The Magi brought gifts to Jesus that upon first glance look way too big for a little child of a carpenter. Notice the gifts they brought:

Matthew 2:11 (ESV) And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

The Bible says that the Magi gave Jesus three gifts. These are not ordinary gifts. They seem unusual gifts to bring to a baby shower—gold, frankincense, and myrrh. What is myrrh?



Myrrh is the resinous exudate from the stems and branches from a low shrubby tree, native to the Arabian deserts and parts of Africa. Its gum drips from the shrub onto the ground, where it hardens to form an oily yellowish brown resin.

Myrrh was an ingredient of the holy anointing oil (Ex. 30:23-33). It was prized for its aromatic qualities (Psa. 14:8; Prov. 7:17; Songs 3:6; 4:14), as well as in cosmetic preparations. It was used to relieve pain (it was offered to Jesus at Calvary in Mark 15:33), and was one of the spices employed at his burial (John 19:39).

Trans: The gift of gold points to Christ as King. The gift of frankincense points to His divinity and priestly work. So what does the gift of myrrh point to? It points to the cross. The gift of myrrh points to Christ as Savior!

BODY: In the Gospel of Luke, he recorded the shepherd's faithful response to the good news that Christ the Savior had been born. We too can faithfully respond to the good news about Christ the Savior has come. How can we faithfully respond to the good news that Christ the Savior has come? The text gives **three ways** to faithfully respond to the good news that Christ the Savior has come.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRIST THE SAVIOR:

1. Hear it.

EXP: (20, 10-11) Look at v.20. Three ways the shepherds responded: "**glorifying and praising** God for all they had **heard** and **seen**, as it had been **told** them. Circle the word "heard." They heard the story!

"**Heard**" (20) (ἀκούω, *akouō*) – Not just hearing, but "to attend to, to consider what is or has been said."

"**Shepherds**" (8) – Why them? Maybe shepherds would recognize the Lamb of God lying in a manger.

"**Good news**" (10) (εὐαγγελίζω, *euangelizō*) – the gospel, the good news, good tidings.

"**Unto you**" (11) – This invitation is for you! Have you heard it? What is this good news?

"**City of David**" (11) – Luke is careful to give us the historical setting of Christ's birth. From a human perspective a mere Galilean peasant traveled to Bethlehem at the decree of a Roman emperor. But in reality, Caesar's census may have commanded Joseph, but God commanded Caesar.

"**Savior, Christ the Lord**" (11) – Three titles: Savior, Messiah, Lord. Born "unto you," unto us!

ARG: **Those who really hear the good news are able to hear the Spirit of Christ calling them to follow Him.**

John 10:27 (ESV) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

ILL: Have you ever noticed a mother's ability to hear her baby's cry? Or an infant's ability to recognize her mother's voice? Jesus often said, "He that has ears to hear let him hear." Have you really heard the story?

APP: Have you heard the good news? That Jesus Christ was born "unto you?"

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2. See it.

EXP: (20, 15-16) Look at v. 20 again. Circle “seen.” The shepherds didn’t just hear the story, they went to “see it” for themselves. Look at v. 15 -16, they “went in haste” to “see this thing that has happened.”

“Seen” (20) (εἶδω, *eidō*) – “to perceive with the eyes,” Also, “to experience any state or condition.”

“See this thing” (15) (ὁράω, *horaō*) – Lit., “to stare at.” To really see a thing.

ARG: This “seeing” is less about the eyes and more about “entering the story,” engaging all the senses.

Psalm 34:8 (ESV) Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!

ILL: How many have tried to get a child to taste something new? It’s not enough just to give it a casual glance. You have to take a bite to really “see” whether it’s good or not.

APP: Having heard the good news of Jesus, do you see it? Have you experienced it? Have you seen beyond the cradle to the cross? It’s one thing to hear and know the story, but have you truly entered the story, so that your story and Christ’s story have intersected? Has the gospel story changed your story?

3. Tell it.

EXP: (17-20) Look at v. 17. After the shepherds “heard” the good news and “saw it” for themselves, they “made known” the story to others.

“Made known” (17) (διαγγωρίζω, *diagnōrizō*) – to publish abroad, make known thoroughly. They told everyone. The angel told them. They saw for themselves. Now they were the messengers. Tag, you’re it!

“All who heard it wondered” (18) – the shepherd’s telling caused everyone who heard to marvel.

“Treasured...pondered” (19) – The shepherd’s story of the angelic appearance even added to Mary’s understanding. She now knew of 4 angelic visitations (Zechariah’s, Joseph’s, hers, and the shepherds).

“Glorifying and praising” (20) – The shepherd’s telling added to their praise of God. If you really want to be moved by the good news, tell someone else and see them respond with wonder.

ARG: Mark 16:15 (NLT) And then he told them, “Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone.”

ILL: Have you noticed how having children experience Christmas brings the wonder back to you?

APP: Having heard and seen the good news, will you go and tell others? It’s the only way they can hear and see and believe, but it’s also a way to really get the wonder back for you too!

CONCLUSION: When the shepherds returned to their flocks, they glorified and praised God for all they had heard and seen as it had been told them. We can respond faithfully this Christmas as the shepherds did to the good news that our Savior, Christ the Lord has come!

Luke 2:11 (ESV) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

How will you respond to this good news? He has been born “unto you.” We can respond to the Good News that Christ is Savior by **hearing it, seeing it** and **telling it** to others, glorifying and praising God as we go!

What gift will you give Jesus?

Will you offer Jesus the gift of gold by recognizing Him as Christ the King?

Will you offer Jesus the gift of frankincense by confessing Him as your LORD?

Will you offer Jesus the gift of myrrh by receiving Him as your Savior?

Let’s pray.