

A night landscape featuring rolling hills in the foreground, illuminated by a soft, warm light. The sky is a deep, dark blue, filled with numerous stars. A prominent, bright star with a four-pointed diffraction pattern is located in the upper left quadrant. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

*The Journey...*

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

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." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. **When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them** about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 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

# There Is Always A Reason For Joy

***Happiness is merely external, fleeting, and comes from earthly things.***

***Joy, on the other hand, is internal, selfless, sacrificial, and grows out of a spiritual connection with God.***

***Happiness is dependent upon external circumstances, while joy rises from within based upon your relationship with God.***

# There Is Always A Reason For Joy

## **The Shepherds:**

- Social Standing
- Tough Job
- Fearful of God's Work



# There Is Always A Reason For Joy

## You and I

- God sees you differently than others see you

*1 Jn 3:1 How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!*

- God often works through unexpected people and means

*Is 55:8 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.*

- While God's work is sometimes frightening it is always for your best.

*Rev 1:17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last."*

# When You Don't Feel Joy Change Your Focus

**“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.”**

**Col 3:1-4**

# When You Don't Feel Joy Change Your Focus

- **LISTEN** to what God says:

*“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you.”*

- **BELIEVE** what He says:

*“Lets go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened...”*

- **Act on what you hear and believe”**

*“So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.”*

# Once You "Get It"...Give It Away!

- **Vs 17: Once they had seen him**  
**Lit = to observe with your own eyes, to view or see**
- **Vs 17: They spread the word**  
**Lit = Compound word: To make know + Everywhere**



# The Challenge For Today

- **LOOK** for reasons to be joyful
- **CHANGE** your focus
- **SHARE** what you know personally
- **PRAY**

**If you don't have a reason for joy because you don't know Jesus in a personal way, PRAY with me now.**