

HOLY MOMENTS – 3 of 4

Don't Hesitate

December 15, 2024

INTRODUCTION So today I want to ask you to be open to any divine appointments God gives in the future, to not hesitate when prompted to share your faith, but you will proclaim it boldly!

YOU NEVER KNOW HOW GOD MIGHT USE ONE MOMENT OF BOLDNESS TO CHANGE SOMEONE'S LIFE.

Today we're going to be in Luke 2, looking at Mary and Joseph, when the Son of God, Jesus, was born in a manger.

And we're going to start in Luke 2:8, *⁸That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them.*

They were terrified, ¹⁰but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"

The angel makes the prophetic declaration, **"I bring you good news and great joy. Today in Bethlehem, a Savior has been born unto you."**

What's so interesting to me is this prophetic world-changing, history-altering moment actually followed 400 years of silence. The last time that God had spoken was through the prophet Malachi.

Malachi, the prophet, said God would turn the hearts of the Father back to the children, the hearts of the children back to the Father, and then silence.

And now God is speaking again through an angel announcing to shepherds the birth of the Savior! Shepherds' status in society was very low. Why shepherds?

Some scholars believe that these shepherds were not ordinary shepherds. They believe these were known as shepherd priests. They were in the field, preparing the sheep for the Passover.

They were preparing the sheep to give their life, when the Lamb of God is born into this life.

We don't know for sure if that was the case, or if they were ordinary shepherds.

What we do know is that during this time in history, most shepherds were despised and had very little or no respect in society. They had four kinds of ongoing significant issues that held them back again and again. They simply weren't trusted.

The first thing is they were not even allowed to testify in court.

So, if there was a crime, and a shepherd saw the crime, they were considered so untrustworthy that their word was not a valid testimony, because no one would trust a shepherd.

Second issue is that they rarely sold property, because if you were buying something from a shepherd, you'd think, **"This thing is probably stolen. It probably doesn't even belong to them."**

So they couldn't buy and sell very easily. Third issue is they were ceremonially unclean, meaning they were considered unworthy for temple worship.

So, if you had a heart for shepherds, and wanted to invite them to church, they wouldn't even be allowed in, because they weren't considered clean, and therefore were turned away.

And finally they were known as social outcasts, kind of like the bottom rung in society, like a tax collector.

They were considered like prostitutes, and some parents would teach their children, **"If you see a shepherd coming, you walk on the other side of the road, because you don't want to get too close to someone who is so unclean."**

But here we see God chose out of every type of person on Earth, the unpolished, unremarkable, uneducated shepherds to declare the greatest news in the history of the world, **"The Savior has been born."**

And the moment the shepherds hear the news, they said, **"We gotta go to Bethlehem, and see what happened."**

And with no hesitation, Scripture says, *¹⁶They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.*

There was no hesitation, no holding back, no, **"Let's think about it, let's pray about it. Let's see if we're ready."**

No, they hurried, there was no hesitation. One of our greatest prayers for the modern-day church, would be that we'd get rid of spiritual hesitation. That there would be a sense of spiritual urgency, and anticipation.

If people would say, **"I want to be the first one into church, because I want to be in the presence of God. And I don't ever want to go to church alone, because I want to bring somebody with me. Because every time we're there, God does something."**

And I would love it if people would recognize, **"I think Jesus may be coming back soon. And if I think he might be coming back soon, then I'm not going to hesitate."**

I'm going to have a sense of urgency. I want to get someone to church.

Did you know that Advent is the most likely time of the year for someone far from God to say, **"Yes,"** to an invitation to be close to God, even more than Easter!

God, give us a sense of urgency, a heart for those who are far from You. Give us eyes to see in any interaction, that we may be able to invite someone and bring someone.

Because you have no idea what God might do through one moment of boldness, to change someone's life. With no hesitation, they ran to see the baby Jesus.

And Scripture says, *¹⁷After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.*

What did the shepherds do? Told everyone.

Don't miss for a moment the courage it took for a despised people group, to boldly share about the birth of Jesus, because they had every reason to hesitate.

They were nobodies, people didn't like them, they didn't believe them. People said, **"They're probably lying. These people, they're not even worthy enough to carry this kind of message."**

Next time you're tempted to hesitate, I want to remind you, you're not alone. We're all tempted to do it. Why is it that we hesitate? Maybe we feel a little bit insecure.

If they ask a question, we're not going to be able to answer it. We don't want to be pushy. We don't want to be a weird, annoying, obnoxious Christian.

But when your life is changed by Jesus, and your sins are forgiven, you just can't keep that to yourself!

When it's on your mind what Jesus did for you, you don't care what anybody thinks, you just can't hold back, **"I've been changed by Jesus, and I have to tell you about it."**

And the shepherds told everyone, **"The Messiah, the One you've been praying for, He's here!"** And with urgency they proclaimed to everyone.

And Scripture says this, ¹⁸*All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished ...*

When's the last time you said, **"The fact that Jesus loved us while we were still sinning and gave His life for us is a message I must share. The virgin gave birth to a Son. His name is Jesus. And He came to save all people from their sins."**

Their message was easy, and simple, and clear. God reached down, so you could be lifted up, that God took our sins, so we could take his righteousness, that God was born into poverty, so we could experience his eternal riches.

And God didn't announce this message to royalty in a palace. But to shepherds, who are outcast, so the world would know that no one is too far from God's reach, and no one is too low for God's love.

There's no sin too great for God's grace. He chose the lowly shepherds on a remote hillside, outside of a tiny Judaea village, why?

Because **GOD OFTEN CHOOSES THE UNLIKELY TO DO THE EXTRAORDINARY.**

He often chooses people just like you, and me, those who don't feel educated enough, holy enough, worthy enough. And he calls us, and prompts us to know Him and share His love with others!

So, if you're a follower of Jesus, sometimes you'd rather pray for than witness to. But you will have multiple opportunities. If you have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and a heart to care, God will prompt you.

And you have no idea how God might use one moment of boldness to change someone's life. Or you might hesitate. And that's why I say today, **"Don't Hesitate!"**

And at some point, we have to care more about those that are outside, and go out with the love of Jesus, and say, **"No matter what you're doing, Jesus' grace is real. Just as real for you as it was for me."**

No more hesitation.

You never know how God might use one moment of boldness to change someone's life. So when you think about this story, that the angel announces the birth of the Messiah, the Savior, who knew about the birth of Christ, who knew?

There's Mary, she was there. There was Joseph. And there were some uneducated, unlikely, unkept shepherds, who told everyone about the birth of Jesus. And we are here today, because of the boldness of a few unlikely shepherds.

I'm going to ask you to say, **"Lord, make me bold!"**

But I want to warn you, when you do, you might start seeing some more opportunities to share your faith with others.

You might start saying to your depression, **"A Savior is here, I want to be delivered from this."** You might talk to your finances and say, **"A Savior is here and I want to tithe."**

You might say to your hurt and pain, **"There's healing in Jesus, a Savior is here."** You might tell your sins and shame and sorrows, **"A Savior is here, I've been set free."**

Who the Son sets free, is free indeed.

And since you're telling everything in your life, you also tell your boss, and the people you work with. And your child that's running from God, the best news ever, **"There's a Savior waiting for you!"**

Don't give up on them because God didn't give up on you. His grace is real. You keep praying, and believing, and being sensitive to the voice of God.

What will happen if you hesitate when you're prompted? Not much.

But what if there was an urgency born out of a really transformed life? I want you to know what it's like to be forgiven. What would happen if you're bold?

One moment of boldness - the lost might be found, the blind might be healed, the deaf might hear, the dead might come to life, and God might break the chains of addiction, and free people from depression, and restore broken relationships,

and answer prayers, and change countless lives, because you have no idea how God might use one moment of boldness to change someone's life.

What's the message? It's simple, the Savior's here, his name is Jesus. He was born to save people from their sins!

CONCLUSION When I accepted the call to ministry, I had to transfer from MTSU, to Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama. I changed my major to Religion and Philosophy.

Since there were several students studying for the ministry, the Chaplin decided to take us on a Seminary tour during the January term. We visited Vanderbilt, Asbury, Duke, and Emory.

It was a chance for us to decide where to go to Seminary. While we were at Asbury, they took us into Dr. Robert Coleman's class on Evangelism. Dr. Coleman was an amazing person who taught us so much.

On that particular day he shared a personal testimony for his devotional to begin the class. He said as a young man he had the opportunity to go out into the hollers of Kentucky to witness.

As he was walking beside a creek, way back in a holler, he met a coalminer named Mr. Meadows. Mr. Meadows had just gotten off work and he was walking home.

Dr. Coleman asked Mr. Meadows if he could talk to him for a few minutes and Mr. Meadows said, **"Yes."** Dr. Coleman shared his faith with Mr. Meadows as the coalminer listened.

Then Dr. Coleman asked Mr. Meadows if he was a Christian and the coalminer said he was not. Then Dr. Coleman asked him if he would like to become a Christian and he said, **"Yes."**

Dr. Coleman said as they knelt down to pray, he realized they were in the creek, but it didn't seem to matter. Mr. Meadows prayed to receive Christ and was saved that very afternoon!

Dr. Coleman said he walked home with Mr. Meadows and watched him tell his family about his decision. They were overjoyed to hear the good news.

Dr. Coleman said that later on he went back to visit that family and had dinner with them. They were so happy to see him again. Dr. Coleman said it was the most amazing conversion he had ever witnessed.

When he finished telling us that story, he said, **"Let us kneel for prayer and we hit the floor simultaneously!"** After he finished praying, I knew I had found a seminary!

Dr. Coleman challenged us not to hesitate to give our witness and possibly lead someone else to Christ. I went on to take his class on Evangelism and I'm so glad I did.

You don't have to go to seminary and take a class on evangelism to share your witness with someone. All you have to do is trust God and not hesitate when He gives you a chance!

Let us pray. Father, make us bold. And I thank you in advance for all the divine opportunities you're going to give us this week.

God help us to be interruptable. Make us willing to let you prompt us. Even when we're on our own schedule, even when we're not in the mood, God, help us to see the opportunities.

God, give us an urgency. Help us see people and invite them to church. And God, when your Holy Spirit leads us, give us the words to say, and the faith to believe that one day we will see a harvest!

Now where do you stand spiritually? If you say, **"I'm not really sure,"** I want to tell you as clearly as I can, there is a Savior named Jesus.

He was without sin, He was perfect. Jesus was known as the Lamb of God. He was God in the flesh, who died in our place so we could be forgiven. So how do we receive this forgiveness? We just step away from our sinfulness, and by faith, we call on His name.

This is why it's called good news, 'cause He paid the price. And when you confess that He's Lord, He forgives all of your sins, and you become brand new. And that's the very reason some of you are here today.

Just say, **"Jesus, I'm giving my life to You! Thank you Jesus for saving me! I accept You as my Lord and I want to follow You!"** And Jesus will save you right here, right now!

And when He does, you can tell everybody with urgency! In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen!

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