DAY 15

LUKE 2:8–12

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 that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

One ordinary night, as the shepherds settled into the routine of watching their flock, God interrupted with something extraordinary! The announcement of the arrival of the Savior of the world given to the shepherds included a sign to confirm it. The angel said they would find the sign, the proof of this good news, in Bethlehem … a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

These shepherds are believed to be the Levitical shepherds who were raising and caring for the animals used for the sacrificial offerings in the temple in Jerusalem. They would have known to watch not only for signs the Messiah was coming, but also for signs of health among their flock. When lambs were about to be born, the shepherds would take the ewes to nearby caves for safety. Once the lambs were born, the shepherds would examine the lambs for spots and blemishes. They would keep the lambs safely wrapped in swaddling cloths so they would not injure themselves. Passover lambs had to be perfect in every way.

There was no mistaking that this sign was the one that the Jewish people had been waiting for … The Lamb of God, the Messiah, who takes away the sin of the world, was here.

Just as the shepherds went to Bethlehem to worship the Lamb, we are invited to come to Jesus with a heart of gratitude and Worship Fully this Advent season. He is Immanuel, God with us. We may not receive an angelic sign like the shepherds did, but God hears our prayers and asks us to draw near to Him in the waiting.

REFLECT

Is there an answer or a prayer you've been waiting to receive from God? How does your prayer life influence your worship? Do you find yourself worshiping a lot these days? Why or why not?

PRAY

Father, we celebrate with gratitude that you provided Jesus, your Son, as the Lamb who takes away our sin. Thank you for the gift through your Holy Spirit of being present with me even today. Turn my need for signs and answers into songs of praise. Help me to notice your love at work all around me. Amen.