

“*The Scrawny Kids in PE...*”

A sermon by *The Skit Guys* organization

as part of their series, **The Glory of Christmas**.

Their sermon modified by Pastor Steve Easterday-McPadden
for FUMC Grand Junction, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020

(**Skit Guys* video clip, 0:13 to the end*)

“The scrawny kids in PE...” – I love that! If there’s any mental image that captures the “ordinariness” of the shepherds in **the Glory of Christmas**, it’s that one! Oh,, sure, there was the occasional “perfect kickball king” on the playground or the “perfect volleyball queen”, but let’s face it...most of us were the scrawny kids in PE! Nothing remarkable about us...hoping only to be spared the humiliation of being picked last – again – and hearing – again – the awful groan of the team that got stuck with us. Notoriety on the playground was not to be our lot in life!

But one of the most important aspect of **the Glory of Christmas** is that it is God’s gift for everyone. No matter who you are, where you are from, what you look like, or even what you smell like, the baby Jesus born in Bethlehem was the Savior of the world intended for *everyone*. God’s planned recipients of the glorious gift of salvation through His Son was everybody, everywhere.

Remember the Scripture reading we just heard? The message the angel of the Lord entrusted to the shepherds that first Christmas night while out in the fields with their sheep? Remember? It was crystal

clear: It was for all the people. And *ALL* means everyone, even the scrawny kids in PE!

The Glory of Christmas is that God’s intention was that nobody gets left out. Every person created in the image of God was, is, and forever will be a person God desires for Jesus to save. While the shepherds out in the fields were the ones chosen to *begin* sharing the message that was entrusted to them, God’s intentions were for them to be just the first among many to receive the good news of Christmas and the glory of who Jesus came to save: everyone! This glorious, inclusive truth is echoed throughout the New Testament. Listen to just a few verses that back this up:

⁵ “...there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and...[humanity], the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ who gave himself as a ransom *for all*, which is the testimony given at the proper time.”
– 1 Tim 2:5-6

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world [– all –] might be saved through him.”
– John 3:16-18

The line that “Dan”, the shepherd in the video, delivered at the manger was a sobering one. He said, “God asked me to be the keeper of the most important message that’s ever been kept.” While certainly true and a glorious responsibility, this invitation that started with the shepherds was never meant to end with them.

That first sharing of the Christmas story with the shepherds was only the initial link of a global communication chain LONG before the “magic” of the Internet would make such a thing feasible. In one of the final moments on earth before His ascension back to the Father in Heaven, Jesus gave His disciples an overt commission that has been described as “great” because of its scope in terms of the number of people it is intended to reach: Everyone around the world.

¹⁸ “And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of *all nations*, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

– Matthew 28:18-20

It has always been at the center of God’s heart for all nations, all people all over the world that “God so loved” and created, to come to know and experience (1) release from the bondage of sin and (2) restoration to eternal life through Jesus.

The story of Jesus as the Savior of the whole world was meant for you on its way to someone else. The good news of Jesus was intended to make its way to highways rather than cul-de-sacs. Highways keep going; cul-de-sacs are dead ends. This story must keep going and going and going until all have a chance to hear.

What this means is that the glorious message of Christmas has been entrusted to first century

shepherds, 21st century method actors, “the scrawny kids in PE...”, and every other person who has put his or her faith, hope, and trust in Jesus for salvation. For all who have responded to this message of hope, peace, joy, and love found in the person of Jesus have been entrusted and commissioned as ambassadors of Jesus, compelled by His love to share this glorious story with the whole world. No one should be left out. All are deserving of hearing the good news of Christ in ways that are understandable and clear.

As “Dan” the shepherd said, “God sent the greatest gift ever, the Prince of peace.” The peace everyone can have with God – even “the scrawny kids in PE...” – comes through the One who embodied it while wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger: Jesus.

How will you and I respond to **the Glory of Christmas?** And who will be the next person you choose to share the story with, so that it takes to the highways and the byways and isn’t stuck in a cul-de-sac?

Let’s pray... (*into The Lord’s Prayer at 9 AM but NOT at 11.*)