

## The Coming of a Shepherd

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**Sermon Synopsis:** Life can be so disappointing that we move into fix-it mode, and lose sight of what's right in front of us, and is all that we need: God's presence

**TEXT:** Matthew 1:18-23 (ESV)

**Intro:** *We can miss what's available to us because we're caught up in what's right in front of us*

**We can be caught up only with what's right in front of us** **AP!**

When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together **she was found to be with child** from the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:18, ESV)

### Reactive

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, **resolved to divorce her quietly**. (Matthew 1:19, ESV)

**What's right in front of us can distract us from what is deep within us** **AP!**

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, **do not fear** to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 1:20)

- Notice that Joseph thought his solution was "just," but God diagnosed as coming from a place of "fear"
- **Sometimes our good intentions are based off of deep apprehensions**

**God wants to interact with what is deep within you** **AP!**

"Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, **for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.**" (Matthew 1:20)

- **Fear not**, Abram, I am your shield (Genesis 15:1) **AP!**
- It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. **Do not fear** or be dismayed. (Deuteronomy 31:8)
- **Do not be afraid** and do not be dismayed, for the Lord God, even my God, is with you. (1 Chronicles 28:20)
- The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want...Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, **I will fear no evil**, for you are with me (Psalm 23)
- **Fear not**, for I am with you (Isaiah 41:10)
- You came near when I called on you; you said, **'Do not fear!'** (Lamentations 3:57)
- **Fear not**, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand and humbled yourself before your God, your words have been heard, and I have come because of your words. (Daniel 10:12)
- My Spirit remains in your midst. **Fear not**. (Haggai 2:5)

Notice the corollary that follows the command not to fear?  
Some action or promise of God. And most often, the promise of His presence.

**Bible: not the solving of our problems, but the presence of our God**

Acts 17:27-28 (NIV)

From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. **God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him**, though he is not far from any one of us. **'For in him we live and move and have our being'**

That's why Christmas is such good news

**Christmas is about how God came closer than we could imagine**

**AP!**

Matthew 1:22-23 (ESV)

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:  
"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel"  
(which means, **God with us**)

**Three greatest words**

And could it be, that **you are missing out on what is available to you, because you're caught up in the circumstances that are right in front of you?**

Maybe it's time to look up, turn around, and release your fears to the God who has been waiting for you and pursuing you your entire life.

**Begin by asking honestly: What am I most afraid of?**

And inviting God into that deep place. He loves you.

The proof of his love is Jesus.

1 John 4:9 (NIV)

This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.