

This past Thursday, I spent my afternoon on the phone trying to fix a major airline screw-up with Tori's flights to and from California as she travels with her dance team to perform during the half time show at the Holiday Bowl in San Diego. After 5 ½ hours on the phone, it was finally straightened out. To me, that was good news.

I was talking with one of the disciples here at Immanuel and she had received a positive doctor's report. That was good news.

I know somebody who had been searching for a job for almost a year. He finally got a job and started last week. That was good news.

I have a friend from seminary who was in a car accident this past week. Her car was totaled but she was not hurt and she was able to get a new car. That was good news.

The world does seem to have more than its share of bad news, news that takes the Christmas spirit away from us.

Good news on the other hand, does not seem to be as wide spread. Yet there is good news to be heard and shared.

On that first Christmas Eve, the shepherds who were watching their flocks in the fields did not have the good news to lift them up. They might have been worried about their flock because of the threat of wild animals. They had a long night ahead of them and they might have been fighting sleep because they were so tired. They might have been worried about family or friends who were struggling in some way.

Little did they know what they had in store!

After Jesus was born, an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds and said, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."

After hearing the good news that the long awaited Messiah was born, the shepherds hurried off to see the baby.

The good news never gets old. On this night, we celebrate the greatest news ever: the Messiah, the Lord and Savior of the world is born. We all hear good news in our life, but none of it compares to the good news on that first Christmas night.

I was watching one of Hallmark's Christmas movies late last night while working on this sermon. A mother was talking to the town pastor who invited her and the kids to worship. She said something about her not going to church because she was a slow learner.

As I thought about that line in reference to the good news that we receive this night, I believe all of humanity are slow learners. For around 2000 years, people have been celebrating the birth of the Messiah. And yet, we still don't truly understand it.

We know what the good news is. We know that the Son of God was born. After all, that is why we have gathered here this evening. But we don't always realize or embrace the fact that God gave HIS son as a gift to each one of us. This is where we are slow learners.

This baby is the greatest gift that any of us has ever received. The news concerning the birth of Jesus is greater than any good news that we have received because through the birth of *this* baby, God puts into motion HIS plan for our salvation.

In this Hallmark movie that I watched, the lady is talking to her daughter when the daughter says, "All you have to do is believe in him." The mom replied, "I don't think I'm very good at that." The daughter replied, "That's the easy part. You don't have to be good; you just have to do it."

We don't have to be very good when it comes to believing in the good news; all we have to do is believe it. Believe that a baby was born who grew into a young man, only to die for our sins. This is the good news that we celebrate. It is way better than any good news that we have received from a doctor, surviving an accident, getting a job or even getting a huge mess cleared up.

Throughout this Christmas weekend and into the New Year, be sure to take time to embrace the good news for us: that Christ our Lord was born so that we may have eternal life.

"Do not be afraid, for behold, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."