

- I love the Christmas Carol “Go Tell it on the Mountain” not necessarily because it’s theologically profound or even for it’s tune,
- I love it because I think of past Children’s programs where the children get to the chorus and yell at the top of their voices
- “Go Tell it on the Mountain!”
- It is often referred to as “Go Yell it on the Mountain.”
- It’s a carol that is dedicated to the shepherds, it is the birth story from their perspective.
- And yet, it is simply a message of good news.
- Unlike Matthew’s account of Jesus’s infancy, which includes exotic magi who travel from great distances to see the young Jesus,
- Luke’s narrative describes the initial revelation of Jesus’ birth to shepherds gathered in the fields.
- These shepherds are, perhaps, among the most important characters of this story because of their role as witnesses who can confirm the accuracy of what has transpired.
- They saw the angels and then they witnessed the sign of a child in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.
- Some approaches to the identity of the shepherds try to emphasize the lowliness of the shepherds or the shamefulness of their position,
- however our text itself offers no such critique.
- Rather, it presents these shepherds as worthy witnesses to Jesus’s birth.
- Author Amy-Jill Levine states,
- *“For Luke, the shepherds have nothing to do with purity, but they do have symbolic value.”*

- *First, they provide, as do Mary and Joseph, a contrast to Caesar Augustus.*
- *They are in the field where they protect their animals: they represent those who care for the vulnerable...*
- *And we will remember them when Jesus, not in Luke's gospel but in the others, speaks of himself as the shepherd of his people."*
- Shepherding also receives a positive spin in Psalm 23 where God is compared to a good shepherd who provides attention to the sheep in God's care.
- The work of shepherding appears to be an accepted way of describing how an ideal ruler should interact with those in their care.
- Little detail is provided about the particular shepherds that we meet in Luke 2.
- Nonetheless, these shepherds are up to the task of receiving and responding to an important mission given to them by the Angel.
- They are given a commission to look for something that might not seem to be present.
- They are to search for significance in an otherwise mundane and daily occurrence: the birth of a child.
- We don't always associate a birth to a celestial sign, it's just a baby wrapped in swaddling cloth laying in manger.
- This birth, however, is different.
- Because shepherds were not allowed in the temples...therefore not allowed in the presence of God,
- God came to them to tell them the good news.
- And while they could just shrug and chalk it up to exhaustion,

- They get up and go to see the new baby king.
- These shepherds, they are the first to hear about, and see, Jesus.
- But don't you wonder what happens next for the shepherds?
- We never hear from them again in the Gospel –
- but their story was never forgotten.
- Their proclamation is remembered.
- But this story isn't just about the shepherds.
- It's not even just about Jesus.
- Martin Luther said that it is tempting to think this story is all about Jesus,
- but the point of Christmas is that the story is all about you.
- You.
- *"To you is born this day a savior"*
- This "YOU" is plural.
- It's a you all. You guys. All yall.
- You all who are gathered here this evening.
- You who are here and maybe don't want to be but your mom made you all come to church on Christmas because that's what we do.
- You all who never think this kind of good news is ever for you- maybe because it never felt like it was.
- God is born today to YOU.
- To all of you.
- We celebrate Christmas – the birth of a baby, lying in a manger...
- and we let this good news dwell in us richly.
- So, you shepherds that are out in the "field" today,
- *Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.*
- *Go, tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born. Amen.*