



Advent

Title: Unwrapping Unexpected Joy

Main Scriptures: Luke 2:8-20

Broken Silence

The Significance of Bethlehem

Unlikely Messengers

The Heavenly Proclamation

Joy Amidst the Ordinary

The Application of Great Joy

“Unwrapping Unexpected Joy” | December 9 & 10, 2023

Small Group Sermon Study | Luke 2:8-20

Opening Prayer: *Father, we thank You for the unearned gift of Jesus. We pray in Jesus' name that You would guide us in this time. God, You are the help that we need. Please lead this meeting and show us Your goodness in many ways. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Icebreaker: Share a story about being amazed by something or someone. What happened and why was it so amazing to you?

Read the key passages of Scripture and review the sermon notes, then answer the following questions:

1. Pastor Wade tells us that “The Greek word for joy, ‘Chara’, resonates with depth. It signifies a joy that goes beyond mere happiness—a joy rooted in the divine fulfillment of promises, the advent of the Savior, and the revelation of God's redemptive plan for humanity. This joy, the angels declare, is not confined to a select few; it is for all the people—a universal proclamation of salvation.” What amazes you about the depth and scope of the arrival of Jesus?
2. The shepherds hear the news, and they express praise. How could you grow in expressing praise for what God has done in sending Jesus?
3. Pastor Wade, when talking about the Shepherds, says that “... in the midst of their daily responsibilities, God invites them to partake in the joy that surpasses understanding”. Think about your daily responsibilities and ask Jesus to show you where you could partake in the joy of Jesus. For example, invite Jesus to give you His joy in your morning commute.
4. Pastor Wade says that “The transformative power of Jesus's great joy is seen in the way it dispels fear and darkness. The angels who announced His birth declared, ‘Fear not’, ushering in a message of hope and liberation. In a world often overshadowed by sin and despair, the birth of Jesus brought a radiant light that penetrates the deepest corners of the human soul, dispelling the shadows of fear and offering the assurance of God's abiding presence.” Are you or anyone in your group being overshadowed by anything that is dark and fearful? How could you pray for each other to experience the radiant light of Jesus for those places? Take time to do that for each other today.
5. Pastor Wade makes the statement, “The transformative power of Jesus's great joy is not confined to a distant past; it is a living reality that continues to impact lives today. As we encounter the joy of Christ, it becomes a catalyst for personal and societal transformation. It compels us to live lives marked by gratitude, generosity, and a profound sense of purpose grounded in the eternal truths of God's Word”. Think about the people in the community around you. Pray together about the people who need to encounter the joy of Jesus in this Christmas season. Ask the Lord to bring at least one name to mind and pray for them together today.

Silently re-read the key Scripture(s) from the message, asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

1. What emotions does this passage or key theme bring up in your heart? How will you manage those emotions as you carry on through your week?
2. What word, phrase, verse, or challenge do you need to take with you this week? How will you act on what you've heard?

Prayer: Ask Jesus to show you any other ways that you could pray for each other about the joy of Jesus. The Bible tells us that the joy of the Lord is our strength. Perhaps you need to pray for each other to be filled with the joy of the Lord and experience a fresh filling with His joy and strength today.