

HANDOUT JOY PART 1: The Arrival of Great Joy

Think About...What The JOY of Christmas Means To You?

C. S. Lewis said, *"I Sometimes Wonder Whether ALL Pleasures are Not Substitutes for Joy."*

- God says His Joy is Not Conditional...Not Based On Our Circumstances!
- It Is Important that We Define What Constitutes TRUE JOY! And That Can Be Difficult.

In the Beginning, the God of Joy made a World of Joys! In Gen 1 and 2 God's Creation was Full of Everything Good, and it was Designed to Delight His Creation.

- By the work of His hands, We Know Joy...*We have Tasted His Goodness in This World, Even on this Side of Mans Fall and Living Midst Sin's Curse.*

God's Christmas Story in Luke Makes It Clear that we can Experience "GREAT JOY" In all Circumstances.

TEXT TURN TO LUKE 2: 8-10 2 Words Jumped Out at Me ... "GREAT JOY!"

POINT: God Made a World of Earthly Joys Only to Surpass them ALL with what Christ Taught...the Treasure Hidden in a Field, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Surpassing Value of Knowing Christ Jesus As Savior and Lord...Which Offers US...GREAT JOY!

- **POINT: There Must be Joy Before there Can Be GREAT JOY.**
- *God designed His World of Joys to Prepare us for "Great Joy" in His Son and Eternity in Heaven!*

Question: Are We Content with just the Joys the World has to Offer...OR Do We want to Experience the GREAT JOY that came that 1st Christmas Night?

- Do Matthew and Luke give Us any Hints as to how Christmas Joy is Set Apart from the Joys that the World embraces. even as they go through struggles and pain?

The Angel who Heralds "Great Joy" in Luke 2:10 is Not Alone. Verses 13-14 *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."*

Note the Great Heights of this Joy — from the Face of Earth ALL the way Up to the Heights of Heaven.

- This News Captures Not Only Lowly Shepherds, But Even the Hosts of Heaven, (which 1 Peter 1:12) says long to look into these things.
- And as God's Glory Rises to the Highest Places, So Does Our JOY.

KEY POINT: "We are Most Satisfied in God When He is Most Glorified". AND I BELIEVE GOD IS MOST GLORIFIED WHEN WE TRUST HIM IN ADVERSITY.

- BECAUSE THE WORLD IS AMAZED WHEN WE REMAIN JOYFUL IN OUR DIFFICULTIES!

Luke & Matthew, "Great Joy" comes together with Worship and Praise. *"The Shepherds returned, Glorifying and Praising God for all they had heard and seen".* Matt 2 The Magi *"Fell Down and Worshiped Him".*

Christmas Joy Goes to Great Lengths. *This is "Good News of Great Joy that will be for all the People".* ALL the People. Not just kings and high-ranking officials, but blue-collar shepherds.

- Not just Jews, but Gentiles — even pagan astrologers like the Magi. All Races... Women and Men...Laymen and Clergy...Plumbers and Dentists...ETC...ETC.
- NO EXCEPTIONS... ALL Kinds of People, in Every Place, at Every Time.
- This is Not a Small Joy Quarantined in Jerusalem, BUT a "Great Joy" Extended and Offered to Every Person in Every Nation.

Christmas Joy Also Goes to Great Depths. Here is a Joy Deeper than Every Fear and Grief...Deeper than Every Sorrow and Pain You May Experience.

Before the Angel Announces "Great Joy," Luke 2:9 says, *An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and They Were Terrified.* The Shepherds are Filled with "Great Fear".

- This Great Joy (JESUS) comes into a World of Great Sin, Great Fear, Great Sorrow, Great Suffering...Which as God-Man Jesus Experiences Without Sin!

Isaiah 53 tells us that this child, *Joy Incarnate*, will be a Man of Sorrows, acquainted with Grief, and it will be His Great Suffering that Secures for Us the "Great Joy"!

From His birth in Bethlehem to His death on a Cross, This Joy was Great Enough For Jesus to...Be born in Obscurity, To be laid in a manger, with No Place to Lay His Head.

- He would be Rejected by His own people...Delivered over by their Authorities, and Betrayed by His Own Friend...Died on a Cruel Cross!

But this Great Joy could NOT be Extinguished. It Can't Because...GREAT JOY is too High, too Long, too Deep — Even for Death Itself.

3 DAYS LATER CHRIST AROSE AND BECAUSE OF THAT AS WE BELIEVE AND RECEIVE HIS FREE SALVATION...WE CAN LIVE EACH DAY WITH GREAT JOY!!!

KEY: OUR GREAT JOY IS BASED ON THE FACT THAT JESUS IS ALIVE NOW AND WILL BE WITH US UNTIL THE END OF THE AGE WHEN WE WILL LIVE WITH HIM IN HEAVEN FORVERMORE! BUT UNTIL THEN...

- Jesus is Our Strength Midst Every Fear...
- Jesus Provides Us Comfort in Every Grief And Holds Us Close in Our Suffering.
- And His Faithfulness Will Continue...Until the day He Removes Every Sorrow...as He Promised in John 16:22, *"No One Will Take Away Your Joy!"*

And this Great Joy Can Be Yours Every Day!

- Today...If You Are Fearful...If You are Angry...If You are Lonely...If You are Discouraged...If You are Filled with Sorrow...If You Feel Hopeless...IN CHRIST...YOU CAN HAVE GREAT JOY!

In the OT, the people of God found JOY when they were Delivered by God or when they Anticipated the Salvation of the coming Messiah.

In the NT, the Arrival of the Messiah, who Delivers His People and Brings Salvation Became the Basis for Rejoicing.

And for You and Me as Christ Followers...Our Joy is found in Trusting Gods Plan for Each Day...becoming More like Jesus and Looking Forward to His Soon Return.

At the End of Lukes Christmas Story in VS 20 it says, *The Shepherds Returned, Glorifying and Praising God for All the Things They had Heard or Seen.*

Final Thought...The Shepherds were Filled with GREAT JOY... Because They had Seen the Promised Mesiah...HOPE HAD COME!

This Month as we Prepare for Christmas Celebration...It is My Prayer That We Will Abstain from the Trappings of Holiday Busyness and May We Look Beyond the Tinsel...Gifts...Beautiful Wrappings and Food with Family and Friends...

INSTEAD...MAY WE SEE JESUS IN A FRESH WAY...AND MAY WE BE SO AMAZED AT THIS WONDERFUL GIFT...THAT IT FILLS US WITH "GREAT JOY!"

BLESSING (Romans 15:13) "May the God of Hope Fill You With Great Joy and Peace as You Trust in Him, So That You May Overflow With Hope By the Power of the Holy Spirit"