

Christmas series: The Arrival

Title – Angel’s Candle –Peace Leads to Joy

Text: Luke 2:9-14

The Arrival

Angel’s Candle –Peace Leads to Joy

Recognizing that God has fulfilled His prophecies in the past brings Hope that he will fulfill all of His word

Hope in God’s Word brings faith to follow Him in all things and at all times, bringing Immanuel with us.

That Faith lived out produces PEACE within and the favor (Goodwill) of God resting upon us.

Peace, inner peace will lead to remaining and lasting JOY

- The Prophet’s Candle – Fulfilled Prophecies lead to Hope
- The Bethlehem’s Candle - Hope leads to Faith
- The Shepherd’s Candle – Faith leads to Peace
- The Angel’s candle – Peace leads to Joy

Luke 2:9-14

⁹ *An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.*

¹⁰ *But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.”* ¹¹ *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.* ¹² *This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”*

¹³ *Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,*

¹⁴ *“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”*

Good news that will bring Great Joy to the People... a Savior is born

- The news is Good
- The news will bring Joy
- The news is that a Savior, Messiah (Sacrifice) is born
- The Joy is linked to a savior’s suffering.
- There is rejoicing and singing and praising from the angel’s and the shepherds in the message of suffering

There are two kinds of joy: HUMAN JOY, and SPIRITUAL JOY.

Human joy can be experienced by anyone, but spiritual or supernatural joy can only be experienced through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

HUMAN JOY: IT'S SOURCES

Celebration.

- Birthdays and anniversaries—any reason for a party will produce joy and happiness in people.
- The birth of a baby is usually a happy time.
- An unexpected surprise, like a raise in pay or a promotion is cause for celebration and joy.

Relationships.

People experience joy through their relationships.

- A family reunion or a family gathering during the holidays is joyful occasions.
- Being together with friends to laugh and play can transform a heavy heart into a heart of joy.

Accomplishments.

We have a sense of joy when we have accomplished a goal.

- High school or college graduations are happy times.
- When you have worked hard on a project at work or around the house you find joy in a job well done.

Health and well-being.

How many of us have had those times of just enjoying life?

- We all have. It may be on sunny day, seeing a rainbow after the rain, or enjoying the beauty of the world around us that we have all just been happy to be alive.
- When we have watched family or friends go through a difficult sickness,
 - or if we have struggled with our health,
 - when we feel strength and life in our body we are glad to be alive.

Assisting others.

We find a deep sense of satisfaction when we can reach beyond ourselves to help someone in need assistance.

This year's lockdowns have removed all aspects of temporary human joy from our lives.

Every category has been eliminated:

- we cannot see family and friends
- our lifelong achievements of graduations, marriages, funerals, even our jobs and businesses have been shut down,
- our celebrations have been ceased,
- our health has been compromised,
- many are trying to maintain the joy that comes from helping others,
 - yet we cannot give them the soul care they need.
 - This leads to discouragement, despair, and depression

HUMAN JOY: IT'S TEMPORARY.

The sense of joy and happiness is linked to the moment; it is tied to the circumstances which produce or bring about the joy.

Is it any wonder that the word HAPPY comes from the same root word as HAPPEN?

- Happy and happen come from the word HAP which means luck or chance.
- Can you see now how happy and happen are related?
- Good luck brings happiness; that which occurs by luck or chance is a happening.

Human joy passes away.

- It doesn't last.
 - Just as sand quickly runs through the hourglass, or as sand falls through your fingers human joy comes to an end and is no more.
- It can be taken away by government mandate
- It can be enforced by social gas-lighting

Ecclesiastes 12:1 (GW)

... The days of trouble come, and the years catch up with you. They will make you say, "I have found no pleasure in them."

SPIRITUAL JOY IS EVERLASTING

I've got good news! We don't have to be limited to just a human expression of joy.

Instead of a temporary joy we can have a joy that will last!

Isaiah 51:11 (NIV)

The ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Everlasting joy can be ours! I know I have received this joy eternal; have you?

We learn something very interesting about joy here.

Gladness and joy are pursuing you; joy is right behind you ready to overtake you.

God gave an absolute promise to His people.

- Their faith could be sure and unmovable, for in the same way God had brought His children out of the bondage of Egypt.

- He would likewise set them free from exile in Babylon.
- Taken from their homes and displaced; they would have nothing of their own.
- But God would overtake them with everlasting joy; sorrow and grief would be gone forever.

But this promise is also for you and me!

In this ever-changing world the joy we experience today is only a step away from sorrow.

God doesn't want us to live a yo-yo, rollercoaster, up-and-down life.

- He wants us to have an everlasting joy independent of our circumstances.
- God wants us to have more than just happiness born of the happenings of the day. He wants our joy to endure regardless of our circumstances.

As Christians, joy should be the prevailing characteristic in our lives

We must admit, however, that often we are sad, somber and gloomy.

- The Bible teaches that as Christians we should be joyful in everything (Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16).
- We should experience joy at the time of our conversion (Luke 19:6),
- when in prayer (John 16:24); even in the midst of fierce trials (James 1:2);
- when being persecuted for Christ's sake (Acts 5:41);
- when serving the Lord (Luke 15:6);
- and this joy should be ours until the journey's end (Acts 20:24).
- As Christians we should be always rejoicing (Philippians 4:4)!

HOW CAN WE RECEIVE EVERLASTING JOY?

- ...this supernatural, spiritual joy of the Lord?

The Isaiah passage told us everlasting joy will be given to the **“ransomed of the Lord.”**

Those redeemed by God, those whom God has purchased will be overtaken by gladness and joy. Sorrow and grief will melt away for those who belong to God!

So, to receive the spiritual joy we must belong to the Lord

BELONG TO THE LORD! AND REMIND YOURSELF THAT YOU ARE THE LORD'S

Romans 5:10-11 (NLT)

¹⁰ For since we were restored to friendship with God by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be delivered from eternal punishment by his life. ¹¹ So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done for us in making us friends of God.

- We have been ransomed—reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord. Jesus has redeemed our lives and made us friends of God.
- Therefore, when we are connected to God through Christ Jesus we can have His joy—the joy of the Lord, a spiritual, supernatural joy that will not end!

The key to experiencing everlasting joy is to be in an intimate loving relationship with Jesus.

Transition:

Spiritual Joy comes through belonging to the Lord and believing in that belonging

But it also comes when we stay connected to Christ throughout our day.

STAY CONNECTED TO JESUS 24/7

One of the biggest reasons why there is no real difference between those who call themselves a Christians and those who are not is COMPROMISE.

- If you are not sold out to Jesus, if you don't obey
- His word wholeheartedly, then everlasting joy will not be abundant in your life.

(John 15:5 NLT).

“I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing”

He is the life-giving vine; His life in us will produce joy.

One of the best ways to see the difference between human joy and the joy God gives to us is found in John 15.

- Here we find Jesus is with his disciples.
- This is the night before Jesus would be crucified.
- Jesus knows in a short time he will be in the garden and Judas will betray Him with a kiss.
- Jesus knows that He will be arrested and falsely accused by the religious leaders.
- Jesus knows He will be beaten.
- He will be mocked and spit upon.
- Jesus knows that within hours His hands will be pierced as the nails are driven into the cross.
- Unbelievable pain and torture is about to begin; Jesus knows it will end in His death.

With these events pressing in upon Jesus, notice what Jesus said to His disciples:
In Jesus' words in John 15:11 we have a three-fold definition of this joy:

1. *It is Christ's joy.*

John 15:11 (NLT). . . *you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!*

The true Christian life is simply the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in a man or a woman.

- Christian joy, therefore, is Christ's joy in a Christian, and this means that this deep-down, unique and abiding joy is not found anywhere else except in Him.
- There are other kinds of joy found in other places, but His joy is found in Him alone.

2. *It is Joy to the full.*

"...that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11).

- Jesus expressed His desire by saying "...that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11).
- There is a great difference between joy and fullness of joy.
- Being filled with the joy of Jesus will make our joy "complete" (NIV) or "wholly mature" (MsgB).
- When we share in Christ's joy our joy won't lack anything!
- Notice exactly what He said –"...that my joy may be in you" (John 15:11).

3. *It is joy which "remains" (KJV).*

John 15:9-10 NIV

⁹ *"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.*

- This word "remains" (John 15:11, KJV) indicates that the Christian's joy is not an intermittent experience but a continuous one.
- A reference to John 16:22 shows us that Jesus indicated to His disciples that they were to pass through trials and testing, but that it would be possible for them to experience His joy even amid those trials.
- Consider three illustrations of the abiding nature of Christ's joy, and the fact that it is unaffected by outward circumstances and conditions:

Jesus was not talking about human joy.

- At such a time human joy would evaporate, but not so for Jesus.
- In the face of death Jesus could talk to His disciples about joy
- The vessel may be partly filled or completely filled. Our Lord's desire for us is that we should experience joy to the full, continually –

1. *John 15:11* — as we have seen, Jesus experienced this joy under the shadow of the Cross.
2. *Luke 10:20* — surely the meaning of the angel's message here is this: "Don't let your joy depend on anything worldly, but on that which abides and which can never be affected by any earthly changes."

3. *Acts 16:25* — Paul and Silas were experiencing most humiliating trial and suffering, yet they were so filled with Christ's own joy that they could sing praises at midnight!

Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

...Who, for the joy set before him [Jesus], endured the cross, scorning its shame.

- How many of us could talk about joy if we knew we were about to experience a violent death?
- Human joy would not hold up under such pressure.
- Only the spiritual or supernatural joy of the Lord can last in the face of death.

Human joy definition

The dictionary defines human joy as the emotion of great happiness; something or someone that provides pleasure; a source of happiness.

- Happy in happenings - conditional
- Joy is to make glad or happy.
- This is human joy

Biblical joy definition: "grace recognized"

The word is chara: *χαρά* (another feminine noun from the root *χαρ-*, "**extend favor**, lean towards, be favorably disposed") – properly, **the awareness (of God's) grace, favor; joy ("grace recognized")**.

It is a remarkable thing that the joy which Christ gives to the believer is not only unaffected by adverse circumstances, but it is actually promoted by such trials and testing. Our authority for saying this is in Acts 5:41; Romans 5:3; James 1:2; 1 Peter 4:12-14.

Isn't this what is needed?

- Joy amid suffering.
- Joy through the suffering.
- Joy despite the suffering.

So the angels say, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will bring great JOY! A sacrifice has come to take your place."

Transition:

Not only belong to the Lord and abide with Him 24/7

But we will experience spiritual joy if we confess our sin

CONFESS ANY AND EVERY SIN

Psalm 66:18 (NIV)

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

- Don't let sin rule your heart. Turn away from sin; change your way of thinking.

2 Chronicles 6:26, 27 (NLT)

"²⁶ If the skies are shut up and there is NO RAIN because your people have sinned against you, and then they pray toward this Temple and confess your name and turn from their sins because you have punished them, ²⁷ then hear from heaven and forgive the sins of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them to do what is right, and SEND RAIN on your land that you have given to your people as their special possession."

- Sin cuts us off from God's blessing, but when we confess our sin, we open the way for God's blessing to be in our lives.
- If you have an area of sin in your life you will not have joy there; instead of joy you will experience stress and conflict.
- For instance, if you are disobedient in the area of your finances, then you have cut yourself off from God's blessing; repentance is the key to having God's blessing in our lives.

Don't let sin suck the joy of Christ out of you.

Transition:

The Scriptures say not just confess our sin but also let go of the personal guilt you have in relationship to that sin

LET GO OF UNRESOLVED GUILT

Psalm 32:5 (Msg)

*Then I let it all out; I said, "I'll make a clean breast of my failures to God."
Suddenly the pressure was gone—my guilt dissolved, my sin disappeared.*

NIV - *Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.*

I said, "I will confess

my transgressions to the LORD."

And you forgave

the guilt of my sin.

Transition:

Belong to the Lord

Believe in that belonging

Stay connected

Confess your sins

Releasing the guilt of our sins

Spiritual joy is also found in mending or healing broken relationships

HEAL BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

Matthew 22:39 (NIV)

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 5:23-24 (MsgB)

"²³ This is how I want you to conduct yourself in these matters. If you enter your place of worship and, about to make an offering, you suddenly remember a grudge a friend has against you, ²⁴ . . . leave immediately, go to this friend and make things right. Then and only then, come back and work things out with God."

Transition:

Finally, in light of the grace that he has shown you must see things through spiritual eyes. Through the eyes of the Father.

SEE YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES DIFFERENTLY

James 1:2-4 (NIV)

² Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. ⁴ Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Psalms 126:2-3, 5-6 (NIV)

² Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." ³ The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy . . . ⁵ Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. ⁶ He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.

It is Good News that Christ the Savior is come.

Remain in Him and find remaining peace

- The Scriptures fulfilled can build your Hope in the faithfulness of God
- The Hope you have can sustain your faith in His Character and Sovereignty
- Your Faith in Him can give you an inner peace in life
- That peace can give you abiding joy even through your darkest moments

The Prophecies lead to Hope
Your Hope will lead to Faith
Your Faith will bring you Peace
That Peace will bring you Joy