

20251221 Great Joy for All People – Ps Bijoy

Luke 2:8-14

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

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.”

Great Joy for a Weary World

When God created the world, he created it with joy in mind. Genesis tells us that everything God made was very good. The garden was full of beauty, goodness, and delight. Trees were pleasing to the eye. Food was good to taste. Life was meant to be enjoyed. From the very beginning, God showed us that he is a God of joy.

Even now, in a broken world, we still taste that joy. We experience joy in simple ways. A kind word spoken at the right time. A hug from a friend. A cool breeze on a hot day. A good meal shared with people we love. A small victory after a hard struggle. These are normal joys. They are real. They matter. They remind us that God is good.

But Christmas joy is not normal joy.

The Bible tells us that Christmas is about great joy, not ordinary joy, not natural joy. But supernatural joy. When the angel appeared to the shepherds, he did not say, I bring you

news of joy. He said, I bring you good news of great joy. When the wise men finally found the child Jesus, the Bible says they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.

God filled the world with joy to prepare us for something even greater. He gave us everyday joy so that one day we would be ready for Christmas joy. Christmas joy does not replace normal joy. It surpasses it.

Throughout the Bible, joy appears again and again. But great joy appears only a few times. Joy appears more than two hundred times in an English translation but “great joy” appears in single digits. “Great joy” is rare and climactic. At the anointing of David’s own son as his successor, at the height of Israel’s kingdom “great joy” (1 Kings 1:40). At the restoration of the Passover after generations of neglect “great joy” (2 Chronicles 30:26). At the dedication of Nehemiah’s rebuilt walls after the return from exile “great joy” (Nehemiah 12:43). Joy is the stuff of every day; “great joy” is kept for the highest of moments.

That is why it matters that the birth of Jesus is announced as great joy.

Christmas tells us something important about how God works. God gave us a garden in the beginning to prepare us for a garden-city in the end. God made the world to remake it one day. God gave a first covenant to surpass it with a second. God gave John the Baptist to point forward to Jesus. God made a world of joys to surpass them all with the treasure hidden in a field, the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord.

There must be joy before there can be great joy. We must know what is good before we can understand what is better. God designed the joys of this world to point us toward the joy found in Christ.

So what makes Christmas joy great.

First, Christmas joy reaches great heights.

When the angel announces the birth of Jesus, heaven does not stay silent. Suddenly the sky fills with angels praising God. Glory to God in the highest, they cry. Earth and heaven are joined together in celebration.

This joy does not stay low. It rises all the way to heaven. The angels rejoice. The shepherds rejoice. Later the wise men rejoice. Christmas joy moves hearts toward worship. The shepherds return glorifying and praising God. The wise men fall down and worship Jesus. This teaches us something important. And as God's glory rises to the highest places, so does our joy. Because we are most satisfied in God when he is most glorified. We are most satisfied when God is honored. Christmas joy lifts our eyes upward. It reminds us that our deepest happiness is found not in what God gives us, but in God himself.

Second, Christmas joy goes to great lengths.

The angel says this joy is for all people. Not just religious leaders. Not just kings. Not just the powerful or the respected. This joy is announced to shepherds, working men who lived on the margins of society. It is later celebrated by magi who were outsiders to God's promises.

Christmas joy crosses every boundary. It is for Jews and Gentiles. Rich and poor. Educated and uneducated. Men and women. Young and old. It is not limited by race, culture, or background.

This is not a small joy hidden in one city. It is a great joy offered to the whole world. The birth of Jesus signals that God's salvation is wide and generous. No one is excluded from the invitation. Anyone who comes to Christ may know this joy.

Third, Christmas joy goes to great depths.

Before the angel announces great joy, the shepherds are filled with great fear. This matters - Christmas joy does not arrive in a peaceful world. It arrives in a world marked by fear, sin, sorrow, and suffering.

The joy of Christmas is not shallow happiness. It does not pretend that pain does not exist. It goes deeper than fear. Deeper than grief. Deeper than loss.

The child born in Bethlehem is called a Man of Sorrows. He knows grief. He enters fully into human pain. From his birth in Bethlehem to his death on a cross, this Joy was great enough to be born in obscurity, be laid in a manger, and have 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.

But this Great Joy could not be extinguished. It cannot. It is too high, too long, too deep even for death itself. And our Great Joy is now with us to the end of the age, strengthening us in every fear, cheering us in every grief, holding us in all our suffering. Until the day he unseats every sorrow, he promises, “No one will take your joy from you” (John 16:22).

And now this great joy is not just something we remember. It is someone who is with us. This is why Christmas matters so deeply. It tells us that joy has entered the world in human form. God did not stay distant. He came near. He stepped into our darkness. He shared our weakness. He carried our sorrow.

Is it really possible that there can be true Christmas joy in the midst of true human grief?

Yes we can have great joy even in midst of pain.

“Three Reasons for Joy if Christmas Really Happened”

1. Our bad things will turn out for good
2. Our most truly good things can never be taken away from us
3. Our best things are yet to come

As we learn from Romans 8:38–39, nothing “will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” That fact is a reason for joy at Christmas and always!