

## ***Christ our Joy***

*“And the angel said to them, ‘Fear not, for behold, I give you good news of **great joy** that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:10-11).*

Christmas is a time of joy! However, as you know from experience, December 26th is a real date that recurs every year... A month of joyful celebration is quickly brought to an end as all the presents have been opened, the food has been feasted upon, and the families leave, going their separate ways. What’s the emotion then? What’s the feeling? Do you still have joy?

Well, research will tell you that here in the United States, the month of January is the most depressing and causes the most challenges for people’s mental health. Now, why is that? Well, part of the reason is due to the cloudy and cold wintry weather, but another leading factor is what psychologists call the “post-holiday letdown.” Yes, the question for so many Americans after Christmas is: “What now?” The materialism elf got the best of them again this year, and they spent way too much money on gifts, and they now find themselves in a hole to start the new year. And the fact that all the celebration of lights, food, and family has vanished so quickly, they begin to feel extreme emotions of loneliness and sadness...

Now, here is what I want to counter against and help you see. The meaning and message of Christmas is not just for 4 weeks of the year. (Which stores started decorating in October, so maybe more like 8-12 weeks.) But it’s always and forever! Yes, this good news of great joy that Jesus was born, to live and die in our place to grant us salvation in His name, is for us to rejoice in January and every month of the year!

I have always loved tracking the phrase “**great joy**” through Luke’s gospel. At the announcement of Jesus’ birth in the shepherds’ fields, the shepherds are told by the angels that the good news of Jesus’ birth was that of “**great joy**” (2:10). And if you flip to the very end of the Luke’s account in Luke 24:52-53 we read that after Jesus’ ascension, the apostles “*worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with **great joy** and were continually in the temple blessing God.*” You see, the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry in Bethlehem was a reason for great joy, and the closing moments of His earthly ministry as He stood on the Mt. of Olives and ascended into heaven was a reason for great joy. Therefore, all our life in Christ Jesus from beginning to end, and on into eternal glory, will forever be a reason for great joy!

Therefore, when the tree is eventually taken down, and the lights are wound up and put in a box, just so you can become a ball of frustration next Christmas trying to untangle them... Rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, because Christ died on the cursed tree of Calvary to bring you eternal blessing and favor. Know that Jesus is the Light of the world, and His great light has shone and penetrated the darkness of your heart through His saving work. And know that no one can take this joy in Jesus from you, not even the post-holiday letdown (John 16:22).

May Jesus Christ be your joy in this season of Christmas and in all seasons of life! “*Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with **great joy...**” (Jude 24)*

Respect the Blood,  
Dalton Mathis