

## Joy in Uncertain Times Devotion: Part 1

In Luke 2:10 we read *But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people"*

In this small verse about Jesus's birth there are four very important lessons we can learn. During this time of continued isolation, uncertainty of when things will return to "normal", financial strain that is beyond our control, medical concerns, and feeling lonely and scared these four important lessons from this verse can guide us during this time.

This devotion is a four-part series where each devotion will focus on each lesson separately.

Today is the first part where we focus on the words *do not be afraid*.

### *Do not be afraid*

Being afraid is natural and part of our evolutionary resilience. Sometimes being afraid is warranted. For example, when you are walking to your car late in a parking lot that has only a few cars and people, it is normal to feel concern due to the possibility something could happen. It is not normal to be so fearful that you can't walk to your car alone. During this global pandemic time when we are seeing the number of cases double and triple in a day, when we are seeing the number of those dying rising in surreal numbers, and hearing that it seems nothing but isolation from everything is the only way to stop this virus, being fearful is normal. It is normal to be afraid of the virus and it is normal to be afraid of the financial impact people are experiencing. It is normal to be afraid of interacting with others in grocery stores or doctor offices.

But in this time when it may be normal to be afraid, God is telling us not be afraid, because of who God is and what God is about. This verse is focusing on Christ's birth and if we consider the time Jesus was born, the world was chaotic with wars, famines, persecution, violence and death. In fact, one could argue the world was dealing with a deep fear and that everyone was afraid of the future. It somewhat reminds me of today and what our world is like. And in that time and this time God says do not be afraid.

Being vigilant is not the same as being afraid. It is smart to be vigilant. Vigilant means protecting yourself, wash your hands, follow what the government and experts are saying to stop the spread of this virus. However, it is common for vigilance to make us afraid. God is reminding us that in this time of uncertainty we do not need to be afraid but we can be vigilant. Being afraid shuts you down, creates speculation of what could be and before you know it you are living in the world of the "what ifs" and fixating on what could be. This type of fear is not healthy and yet God knows we will end up there. He knew the shepherds would end up there and so intentionally and purposefully God sent his angel's to remind us that we do not need to be afraid with what is going on.

During this time of fear and uncertainty, may you hear God's word and realize that being afraid isn't what God is calling us to be. May you feel God's calming presence of God's

good news and be joyful that his love that endures all things are for all people at all times. Amen.

by Rev. David Piltz