

Joy in Uncertain Times Devotion: Part 3

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 t. his time.

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

Today is the third part where we focus on the words *great joy*.

Great joy

Joy is something that everyone seems to want but many do not seem to experience often. Joy is a word rarely used and instead we use words like happy, elated, cheery, and feeling good. Joy is a deep feeling and sense of peace and happiness and contentment all rolled up into one feeling. I think the word is intentional because this great joy is more than being happy. It's the ability in the middle of turmoil and strife to be content and peaceful. That was the message over 2000 years ago the angels brought us – that in the middle of war, filth, disease, famine, poverty, strife, violence we can have deep contentment and happiness. I think the same is true in 2020 during this outbreak we are all experiencing.

Now this joy, this deep sense of contentment and peace and happiness is not about the world but about the heavenly realm. It is about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. It is about living a life where fear is converted to calm, where anger is transformed into love, where concern is changed into peace. During this time, we are all managing and navigating, I think we all need some joy in our lives.

Now this joy isn't about watching a TV show or talking to a loved one. This joy is an overflowing abundant love for God. This joy is your and mine's choice to say yes to God and follow God at all costs. This joy is the ability to express our happiness and love for God because God has already expressed his love for us as a free gift. Do you have this kind of joy – a indescribable feeling about what God means to you. The message of this passage is that even in turmoil and strife we can have joy in God and express that joy by being loving and kind to others.

It is essential during this time of physical distancing that we intentionally stay connected to each other by phone calls, emails, texts, etc. When you have the joy of knowing God you want to reach out to each other, you want to check in, you want to share your joy of God with others.

Lord, may the joy I have for you continue in these times – times that are challenging and seem dark – and may my joy for you increase in ways I never dreamed possible. May I

draw closer to you and increase the joy I have for you so I can share that unbelievable feeling of joy with others. Amen.

by Rev. David Piltz