

## **12-10-2025 – Finding Joy at Christmas - - Mid-week Encouragement for the soul!**

**C-mas Series: Finding.**

Last week: Hope. **Week 2 – Joy.**

Many people struggle to get thru the holidays. Finding joy can be tough!

**Definition of Joy** – feeling of great pleasure & happiness.

**Truth:** Happy times . . . are temporary. Live life w/ highs & lows.

But in spiritual terms, **JOY is an inner state of contentment and happiness.**

Joy is not dependent on our circumstances. It exists thru good/bad times.

Joy *should* be a characteristic of every Christian... but many struggle.

Tonight – sharing **5 reasons to find Joy this Christmas, & forever.**

Joy is part of the Christmas story. It's why we see it so much this time of year.

Look at **Luke 2 – the Shepherds & the Angels:**

<sup>8</sup> That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, <sup>10</sup> but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! <sup>12</sup> And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. <sup>18</sup> All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, <sup>19</sup> but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

## The Christmas Story gives us 5 reasons to live daily w/ Joy:

### 1. God does what He promises. His word is true.

- Notice: that's 1 reason the Shepherds were glorifying & praising God: **it all happened just** as it was told to them by the Angels. **Truth.**
- **Jesus' birth happened in Bethlehem just as it was prophesied.**
  - o **Micah 5:2** – "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf."
    - **Jesus – born in the city of David, from David's lineage.**
- **B/c God's word is true, we can count on Him.**
  - o We'll have people disappoint us, but not God. You can trust Him.

### 2. The Savior has been born!

- **The Redeemer has come . . . the Messiah is here!** The one who paid for our sins on the cross has arrived. **He loved us so much He was willing to leave the comforts of heaven to experience the agony of the cross.**
  - o Now that is a **reason to celebrate!!**
- **We are blessed to live in this time . . . Savior has already come:**
- **Matt. 13:16-17** – "But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."
  - o **We aren't still waiting for Him to come,** but we are waiting for His second coming. **That's the point of the song, Joy to the World.**

### 3. The Angels were sent to Shepherds . . . to the outcasts.

- **Voices from heaven sent God's message to Shepherds . . . they matter.**
  - o This was a humble birth. Poor even. No inn. **Manger.**
  - o **Jesus came for all people.** Joy for all the people. Poor/rich.
    - **Gospel** is for the thief, the liar, cheater, insignificant, outcast.

#### 4. Shepherds were given a sign to recognize the Messiah

<sup>12</sup> And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." *"this shall be a sign unto you..."* KJV

- **Location: Bethlehem. 5 mi.** Raised lambs for temple sacrifice.
  - **Swaddling cloth.** Significant! Perfect lamb. Shepherds knew!
  - **This was a God-wink.** God knew they would understand.
    - **Swaddling clothes = perfect lamb.** Holy.

#### 5. God gives us Joy . . . we don't have to look for it; it's a gift.

- **Romans 15:13** – "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
- **Joy comes through our belief in Jesus, filled by the H.S.**
  - That's why **all Christians** should live lives **highlighted w/ Joy.**
  - **Galatians 5:22-23** – "the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."
    - **The H.S. will eliminate our negativity if we open ourselves up to His refining process.**

#### Christmas isn't about what we have to give, but what we're given

- Joy is a gift ... Don't let circumstances steal your joy.
- Live in joy. Show joy. And share your joy.
  - Before the Shepherds returned to the field, they told everyone what happened to them. Share what you know; share joy!