

Introduction

Christmas is coming

- In case you've been living under a rock, Christmas is coming
- Liam's calendar on the fridge
- Store decorations
- The Hallmark movies!

Angel's announcement

- Seeing that Christmas is near, I want to share a Christmas passage.
- This morning I want to look at the message the angels brought to the shepherd
- **Luke 2:8-11** *8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*
- Key phrase *Good news of great joy*

Joy: the missing ingredient

- Last week I spoke from James 1 - the message *Count it all joy*
- Addressed recognizing our trials as an occasion to rejoice
- Today I want to visit again the subject of joy!
- **Illustrate:** Baking biscuits. Leave out the baking soda, and you're going to have a very flat biscuit
- Let's talk about Joy

Message

What is joy?

A feeling

- This seems basic, but I'm talking about a feeling / emotion
- As Christians we don't emphasize feelings, and yet scripture consistently documents joy for the believer (a quick search yielded 440+ verses on the topic)
- **Ask:** Are you joyful this morning?

Produced by the Spirit

- In the natural things produce joy, but also sorrow and heartache
- Paul (from prison) urges the believers there **Phili 4:4 (ESV)** (4) *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.*
- Or our scripture last week **James 1:2 (ESV)** (2) *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,*
- Or **Rom 5:3 (ESV)** (3) *More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance,*
- Bottom line: this is not natural!
- Joy is a supernatural emotion. See **Gal 5:22-23 (ESV)** (22) *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, (23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*
- **Point:** The Holy Spirit in the believer produces joy

Centered on Jesus

- A final note: Jesus is the source of joy
- As the Spirit reveals more of Jesus to us - we have more joy
- Said another way, there is no joy apart from Jesus
- **Note** that's the point of the angel's message - Jesus has come, joy to the world!

This is the good news

- The Gospel - or good news - is that Jesus has come
- The angels announce it in Luke 2
- We too are to be announcing it

As His followers, we are to be filled with joy

- Joy should mark the believers life
- See Paul's letter to the Galatians - where's your joy?
- What do we have to offer the world if we're not different from the world?

Why does it go?

As if you are not feeling joy today... ask yourself "Why". Perhaps you'll find one (or more) of these things to be true

It can fail when it's based on the wrong things

- When our joy is based on our circumstances - it will fail as they go from good to bad
- See how Paul writes from prison a letter to the Philippians filled with joy - yet he's unjustly accused and abandoned in prison.
- Our expectations won't be met - if our joy is based on things going the way we think they're supposed to go - we will be disappointed.
- Is the reason you're not joyful today - because things haven't gone as you thought they should?

It can be replaced when other emotions are given priority

- Joy can be shoved out by other emotions
- For instance fear and joy are incompatible
- So much of the scripture about joy is centered on choosing joy - I.e. allowing joy to stay and other emotions to be pushed out
- We give place to fear/anxiety/etc. - when instead we should give place to joy!

It can evaporate when we forget we're loved

- We are sinners
- Sin produces guilt
- Guilt separates us from God (see them hiding in the garden)
- When we try to fix it first - by being better / following the law / etc. - we are robbed of our joy
- This was the issue with the Galatian church. Rather than rejoicing in the freedom and forgiveness of Christ - they were focused on trying to be good enough

Note: Enemy tries to steal our joy

- Let me just remind you - that the battle for joy is a spiritual battle.
- In **John 10:10 (ESV)** (10) *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*
- The enemy comes to steal our joy from us
- **Neh 8:10 (ESV)** (10) *Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."*

- If he can steal our joy - he can rob us of our strength

How can I get it back?

Recognize it's missing

- Before we can make any change - we have to realize we don't have what we need
- **Illustrate:** Switched out wallets, didn't have my library card. Would remember to bring it. Sometimes forgot
- Would you describe your life right now as joy filled?
- We get used to not having it, but that's not God's plan for us!

Return to the source

- Jesus is the source of joy
- **Illustrate:** Routine of getting a drink before the message - I go to the source
- I won't have joy apart from Jesus
- Repent of our sins, receive His love and return to His presence
- Spending time with Him - loving Him and letting Him love you
- Not asking for things, etc. - just being with Him
- Not making this a priority we'll never have joy

Remember His promises

- Been the theme of so much of my preaching
- I can choose joy because I know what He said He will do
- I may not see it yet, but He is coming and will fulfill everything He's promised to do
- Consider **Psalm 30:5b (ESV)** ... *Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.*
- He hasn't forgotten about you! He is still working and will make everything right!

Application / closing

- I've asked this question repeatedly in the message today: Are you filled with joy
- Let people respond

- Have you placed your joy in circumstances or expectations? Let your joy be Jesus
- Are you letting fear / anxiety rule your life? Choose the joy that comes from Jesus
- Have you forgotten you've been loved? Remember our text: **Luke 2:10-11 (ESV)**
(10) And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. (11) For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
- Are you willing to spend time with Jesus this week to be filled again with joy?