

**“God’s Gift Of Joy”** Delivered by E A Terry 12/17/17 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun of Advent  
Colossians 3: 1- 17; John 16: 16 – 24; John 15: 1 – 12; **Luke 2: 1 – 20 (Sermon)**

During Advent we have been looking at the gifts God has given to us.

We have looked at God’s gift of hope, God’s gift of peace, and today we will be looking at God’s gift of joy.

During the Christmas Season many Christians experience the love, the joy, and the peace of Christmas.

However, for other people the Christmas Season is the saddest time of year.

Statistics show there are more admissions to psychiatric hospitals, there are more attempted suicides, and more alcohol purchased during the Christmas Season than at any other time of year.

Why is this so, if the angels announced good news of great joy?

***“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord”.*** (Luke 2: 10 – 11)

This good news of great joy was not limited to a bunch of shepherds outside of Bethlehem 2000 years ago.

This good news of great joy is for ***“for all people”***.

This good news of great joy is universal.

This good news of great joy is for us today!

Verse 11 tells us the good news of great joy is ***“A Savior is born”***

A savior is some one who saves us.

A savior is some one who saves us from the penalty of our sins, saves us from our enemies, saves us from our circumstances, and / or saves us from ourselves!

This good news is that Jesus The Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. (Colossians 1:15)

God came to earth 2,000 years ago in the form of a human to live among His people. (Matthew 1:23).

This good news of great joy means that our creator God has not forgotten us.

This good news of great joy means that Almighty God loves us, our Lord cares about us, and our Lord wants to be with us.

While we do not like to admit it, we are all sinners by actions and we all have a sinful nature.

Romans 3:10 says;” ***There is no one righteous, not even one”***.

The prophet Isaiah put it this way *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; (Isaiah 64:6)*

If our righteous acts are like filthy rags what about our unrighteous acts?

Romans 6:23 tells us that the penalty for sin is death.

However, the good news is that God provided a way for sinful people like me and like you to become righteous by providing us with a savior.

This good news is that Jesus voluntarily died on the cross to pay the price and the penalty of our sins.

The good news is that our sins would be forgiven **if** we repent and **if** we accept the good news that Jesus took our place on the cross by claiming Him as our Savior and our Lord!

Our enemy is the Devil.

In 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8 we are told to be on the alert.

*“Your adversary the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour”.*

The good news is that Jesus came to break the power Satan holds over us.

The good news is that Jesus came to save us from our sinful condition.

This good news is that Jesus came to show us how to live so that we can enjoy life on earth the way God intended.

This good news is that Jesus’ resurrection from the dead assures us of our resurrection and that we can spend eternity with Him in Heaven.

The good news is that Almighty God, the Creator of the universe, loves us so much that He wants to abide with each one of us.

Jesus wants to come into our lives to be with us each and everyday both now and throughout eternity.

The angel announced; *“I bring you good news of great joy”.* (Luke 2:10)

*Joy is defined as utmost delight and happiness.*

Joy is the opposite of sorry, fear, unhappiness, and anxiety.

Joy differs from happiness in that joy is not dependent upon a person’s circumstances.

Happiness and unhappiness can not coexist **but** joy and sorrow can coexist.

We can see this in Hebrews 12:2; *“looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”*

In John 15: 11 we read Jesus' words; ***"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy might be complete.***

There are four key points in John 15:11 that we need to think about this morning.

First Jesus is the source of joy.

Secondly joy can be obtained by hearing, receiving, and accepting The Word of God.

The words, ***"may be in you"*** and ***"might be complete"*** suggest that it is possible for a Christian to have some joy but not to be full of joy.

These words also suggest that a Christian can have joy and then loose their joy.

Satan does not want you and I to be filled with the joy of the Lord because Satan knows that God's joy is the source of our strength.

Nehemiah 8:10 says, ***"The joy of the LORD is your strength.***

And the fourth thing in John15:11 is we need to know is that is our Lord's will that we be filled with joy all the time.

When you are filled with God's gift of joy; God provides you with the needed strength for you to get us through any situation and the power to overcome the Devil.

So the question that comes to mind is; ***"if God wants us to be joyful then why aren't all of us full of joy all the time?"***

The problem comes when we take our eyes off of Jesus we will loose our focus.

Remember Peter walked on the water but when Peter took his eyes off of Jesus Peter sank. (Matthew 14:30)

In John 15:5 Jesus said; ***"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing"***.

If we are not staying close to Jesus our problems will crowd out our joy.

Remember Jesus said; ***"In this world you will have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."*** (John 16:33)

In the Book of Philippians the Apostle Paul identifies several thieves that can rob us of our joy.

If we are not staying close to Jesus we allow Satan to steal our joy.

In John 10:10 Jesus said, ***"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness."***

Satan is real and as Christians we must never forget that Satan wants to steal, kill and destroy the joy in our lives.

If we are not staying close to Jesus we will allow other people to steal our joy.

We have no control over what other people say and do.

But we do have control over how we respond.

We can respond in anger or we can respond with kindness.

We can respond in fear or we can respond in faith.

The choice is ours.

We have to live, work and worship with people.

We cannot isolate ourselves from people and live to glorify The Lord Jesus Christ.

We need other people for us to be fulfilled in this life.

Remember we do not control the wind but we do set the sail!

There are two kinds of people in the world; those that bring joy when they come and those that bring joy when they leave.

If we are not staying close to Jesus we will allow our possessions to rob us of our joy.

Sadly many people are killing themselves trying to get more things?

They mistakenly think; *“If I had a bigger house or if I had a new car I would be happy.*

*If I had a better paying job I would be happy.*

But Jesus said; ***“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”*** (Luke 12: 15)

The secret of having joy without possessions is to be content with what we have. (Philippians 4:12 & 13)

God wants you to have life in all its fullness. (John 10:10)

But, if we are not staying close to Jesus worrying about our problems will rob us of our joy.

The word worry means to be pulled in different directions; to strangle; to pull to pieces.

Studies have shown that only 2% of what we worry about actually happens.

That means that 98% of what we worry about never happens.

In Luke 12.22-31 Jesus tells us not to worry.

Jesus also reminds us that worry does not change things and worry can not make us live any longer?

Remember our Father in heaven knows what we need and He promised to provide for all of our needs.

We just need to believe in God and to trust our Lord.

The secret of experiencing God's gift of joy every day in all situations is staying close to Jesus.

Remember joy is a Devine attribute that God freely gives to all believers. (Galatians 5:23)

As Christians we are not to rely on what we have **or** where we are **or** what we experience but rather we must depend on who we are.

We are followers of Jesus Christ.

We are children of The King of Kings and The Lord of Lords.

We belong to Jesus Christ!

You see the bottom line is this; our joy depends on our relationship with Jesus Christ!

Our joy comes from knowing Jesus Christ personally.

Our joy comes when we depend on The Lord's strength rather than depending upon our strength!

Remember Philippians 4: 13 ***"I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me.***

Our joy comes in glorifying our creator! (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:31)

If we want to experience God's gift of joy in our lives each day we have to have and maintain a close personal relationship with our Lord Jesus, we have to draw from God's resources, and our lives must be focused on glorifying God in everything we do.

**AMEN**