

## Joy to the World

### Luke 2:4-15

**Thesis:** We are a people who find our joy in deep connection with God through Jesus Christ. And, we are invited to grow continually in our capacity to fuel our joy in relationship to the Lord and others.

**Text:** Luke 2:4-15

*Luke 2:4–15 (NIV84) 4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” 15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”*

**The angel came with a message of good news of great joy for all people.** Joy to the world! The Lord has come.

**Defining joy:** (Logos Bible Study Software)

1. Joy is closely related to gladness and happiness, although joy is more a state of being than an emotion.
2. Joy is a result of choice [and connection].
3. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit.
4. Having joy is part of the experience of being a follower of Christ.

At the end of this message, I hope that you are clear to the reality that lasting joy is found in God, in a personal relationship with God through Jesus, and with the help and presence of the Holy Spirit.

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord (Luke 2:10-11).

1. "I bring you"
  - a. Through the angel God brought a message to us.
  - b. The angel delivered a message to us and to this world.
2. "good news of great joy"
  - a. The message is good news.
  - b. The good news is about great joy, not a trickle of happiness.
  - c. The good news causes great joy because God has kept his word and has sent his Messiah, the Anointed One, who is appointed by God to rule, to reign, and to save.
  - d. The good news of great joy is for all people everywhere and for all time.
3. "Today"
  - a. This good news of great joy was for a particular time "for them."
    - i. And, the good news of great joy is for us "today"; it is for all people for all time that is called, "today."
    - ii. *Hebrews 4:7 (NIV84) Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."*
    - iii. "Today" is your day, your time, your opportunity to hear the Voice and to respond. The Lord is speaking; we respond to his initiative.
  - b. This message was a promise from God that was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. God kept his word.
    - i. The concept of *messianic salvation* emerges as a profound theological theme spanning both the Old and New Testaments, representing a comprehensive deliverance that transcends mere political liberation. This salvation is comprehensive, involving both outward political freedom and inner spiritual transformation, and encompasses the restoration of Israel and the salvation of the Gentiles.
    - ii. The messianic salvation present in Jesus' mission fulfills Isaiah's prophecies and represents a new era that supersedes the Law and the Prophets. This new kingdom works powerfully among people and requires a strong response from its hearers. The presence of this kingdom means the gift of salvation, which is both eschatological [end times; future] and present, involving the seeking of the lost and bringing them into restored fellowship with the Father.

- iii. The content of this messianic salvation includes inheritance, life, Spirit, righteousness, and sonship. Critically, all these promises are fulfilled in Christ.... This salvation is not limited to one people but extends to all nations [peoples], as prophesied by Isaiah that "all flesh will see the salvation of God" (Logos Bible Study Software).
  - c. This good news of great joy has historical significance and reality in a specific time and place that forever impacts the whole world, history, and universe.
  - d. This event took place in Bethlehem, "the town of David," in Judea in Israel.
4. *"a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord"*
- a. We all need a Savior, **someone to save us** from sin, self, and Satan.
  - b. We all need a Savior, **someone to deliver us** from darkness, disease, demons, and death.
  - c. Jesus is both Lord (King) and Christ (the appointed, anointed One; Messiah).
  - d. **The gospel of God is found in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.**
    - i. **Lord:** King of Kings; implying a King to rule over his kingdom.
    - ii. **Jesus:** Savior; salvation.
    - iii. **Christ:** Messiah; appointed, anointed One of God.
5. *Luke 2:13–14 (NIV84) 13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."*
- a. **What was the response of the angels to the announcement and proclamation of God?**
    - i. Giving praise and glory to God.
    - ii. And, declaring shalom as the impact: wholeness, safety, flourishing, abundant life and well-being....
  - b. And, the shepherds responded with humility and got into action (Luke 2:15).

**Now, I want to share with you a compilation of what I have learned about joy in my journey and relationship with the Lord, through Scripture, through study, and through putting into practice what God says.**

1. **Joy is found in a person... in the Lord.**
  - a. *Philippian 4:4 Rejoice **in the Lord** always; I will say it again, Rejoice!*
  - b. *Psalm 16:11 (NIV84) You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*

2. Joy is fueled by connection to God and to others.

a. Connection to God.

- i. John 15:11 (NIV84) *I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*
- ii. John 17:13 (NIV84) *"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of **my joy within them**."*
- iii. Zephaniah 3:17 (NIV84) **The LORD your God is with [y'all]**, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing."

b. Connection to others.

- i. 1 Thessalonians 1:6 (NIV84) You became *imitators of us* [deep connection with others] and of the Lord [deep connection with God]; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.
- ii. 2 Timothy 1:4 (NIV84) Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy [deep connection to others fuels Paul's joy].
- iii. Philippians 1:25–26 (NIV84) Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26 so that through my being with you again [deep connection] your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

3. Joy is the supra emotion that you can experience in the midst of other emotions like sorrow, grief, loss, pain, suffering, testing, etc. (Life Model Works)

- a. James 1:2–4 (NIV84) Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.
  - i. You and I can have joy when we face tests, trials, and challenges.
- b. Hebrews 12:2–3 (NIV84) Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who **for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, **so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.**
  - i. Jesus endured the pain and suffering of the cross, and he scorned its shame, by focusing on joy in the midst of torture, pain, suffering, and scorning.
  - ii. As we meditate on Jesus and how he overcame, God will fuel our joy and cause us not to give up or lose the courage to overcome.

4. **Our brains are hardwired to run on the fuel of joy**, not anger or fear. (Life Model Works)
  - a. **Connection to the Lord is the source of joy.**
    - i. *Psalm 16:11 in your presence is fullness of joy.*
  - b. There are **spiritual practices** that help us become aware of the God who is with us like **contemplation** (passive prayer), **waiting on God**, **reflection**, etc.
    - i. *Psalm 46:10 (NIV84) "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*
  - c. **Engage the spiritual practice of asking God through prayer.**
    - i. *John 16:24 (NLT) You haven't done this before. **Ask**, using my name, and you will receive, and **you will have abundant joy.***
5. **We need people whose lives demonstrate the power of joy like Paul.**
  - a. **Because of Jesus, Paul was able to grieve and rejoice at the same time.**
    - i. *2 Corinthians 6:10 (NIV84) **sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.***
      1. Paul experienced joy of the Lord in the midst of sorrow and loss.
  - b. **Because of Jesus, Paul was able to suffer in a prison and still choose joy and a joy-filled response.**
    - i. *Acts 16:16–34 (NIV84) Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. 19 When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice." 22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25 **About***

*midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.* 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" 29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.

I hope that you are clear to the reality that lasting joy is found in God, in a personal relationship with God through Jesus, and with the help and presence of the Holy Spirit.

**I want to share with you some of my personal testimony regarding joy.**

Here is what I wrote in my spiritual journal on Friday, 12'12'25.

Lord, you are my joy. You are my strength. You are my salvation.

It is not just knowing the word, the Bible. The word of God invites us to find true joy. CS Lewis found God when he was *Surprised by Joy*. I want others to find you, to experience you, and to be transformed by the power of your hope, peace, love, and joy.

- My joy is rooted in you, not my circumstances.
- My joy is grounded in you, not what I can do or make happen.
- My joy surfaces even in the midst of problems, attack, or brokenness, because you are anointed with the oil of joy above all your companions.

Joy is more than a feeling. It is more than a state of being. It is an infusion of the life of God in and through my life... like a blood transfusion... like being hooked up to joy.

Joy is more than a feeling. It is also an action. "There is a joy that Scripture commands. That joy is action that can be engaged in regardless of how the person feels." (Elwell, Walter A., and Barry J. Beitzel. "Joy." In *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 2:1224–25. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988.)

- Joy is like a current, shocking and empowering.
- Joy is solid, foundational, unshakeable.
- Joy is found in union with you; in your presence is fullness of joy.

**Joy to the world, the Lord has come!!! Receive your King.**

**Application:**

Let me ask you a question. **What fuels your joy?**

I engaged in this spiritual practice of reflecting with the Lord on Saturday, 12'13'25, and I found myself smiling the whole time. As I journaled my thoughts on what fuels my joy, I had a big ole smile plastered to my face, and I was chuckling all along the way.

**Takeaway/ action:**

**I pray that you will take that question before the Lord and that you will consider:  
What fuels your joy?**