

Good Tidings of Great Joy

Luke 2:1-24

I love Christmas. I love to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. We don't worship Christmas trees. We don't worship the season of Christmas. We don't worship Santa Claus. We don't worship the ornaments on the tree. We worship the Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas time is a great time.

The Scripture we just read is one of my favorite Scripture passages in all the Bible. Just as the babe John the Baptist leaped in the womb of Elisabeth when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, my heart jumps with great joy from within when I hear this Scripture.

""Luke 2:6-8

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.""

Jesus Christ Born as God in the Flesh

Jesus Christ is born as God in the flesh. Jesus, the Son of God, came in the flesh. God the Father didn't come in the flesh. The Holy Spirit didn't come in the flesh. Jesus Christ came in the flesh. He was born of the virgin Mary. He was born as flesh and blood just as we are born.

Jesus was wrapped in swaddling clothes. He was laid in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

And we see in the same country there were shepherds abiding out in a field. They were keeping watch over their flock by night. Shepherds care for their flock. And because they were out there caring for their flock, they get to witness one of the greatest days throughout eternity. There are some big days, but this, the birth of Jesus Christ is one of the biggest days.

""Luke 2:9

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.""

The angel of the Lord comes to these shepherds that were out in a field caring for their flock. The glory of the Lord shone round about them. They were sore afraid. Imagine the angel of the Lord showing up to you. It is a fearful thing. They were very, very afraid. But see what the angel says to them.

""Luke 2:10

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.""

I Bring You Good Tidings of Great Joy

Fear not. Why? For behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. The angel tells them that he's bringing them good tidings of great joy.

So we see this angel show up and say fear not. The phrase fear not is in the Bible 63 times. We see this being said over and over and over again. The one you see right there is the 54th time the phrase fear not is seen in the Bible. "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people."

Notice that the Bible says the good tidings of great joy are to all people. We are to preach in the name of Jesus Christ among all nations. All families of the earth shall be blessed in Jesus Christ. He is the saving health among all nations. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. He is salvation unto the end of the earth.

Jesus says to go ye into ALL THE WORLD and preach the Gospel. Every creature which is under heaven. All people. Jesus came to save all people. All kinds. All types. Anyone. Everyone.

"FEAR NOT: FOR, BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY, WHICH SHALL BE TO ALL PEOPLE." Thank God that Jesus came for all people. He gave every one of us the life we're living. Not just some of us. All of us.

""Luke 8:1-3

And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, 2 And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, 3 And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.""

Jesus Brought the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God

The glad tidings of the kingdom of God. That's what Jesus brought. He is the glad tidings. He is the great joy. He went out preaching the Gospel which is the glad tidings of great joy.

""Isaiah 40:9

O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!""

Hey, listen, we've lost a lot of the joy in this world. This world isn't the most joyful place. We need to change that and especially here. We need this church to be a church of joy, love, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Let's have that joy that Jesus Christ brought to us.

Bring good tidings to others. Know what you've got. **LIFT UP THY VOICE WITH STRENGTH.** Lift up, be not afraid! Fear not! Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy. Bring that Gospel to the people. Be joyful. Let them see it.

""Isaiah 52:7-8

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! 8 Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion.""

Now watch this. I want you to have some joy and understand why.

""Isaiah 52:9-10

Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem. 10 The LORD hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.""

Break Forth Into Joy and Sing Together

Break forth into joy, sing together! Why? For the Lord hath comforted his people!

""Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;""

Hey, we are here to preach good tidings to the meek. We are here, listen closely, we are here to bind up the brokenhearted. There are people that have broken hearts everywhere around this church. Down that street. Up that street. Over there. Over here. Everywhere around us. Within us here. Everywhere.

""Isaiah 61:3

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.""

Beauty for ashes. Oil of joy for mourning. Garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Trees of righteousness. That he might be glorified. We give God all the glory here.

We're celebrating Christmas this year. We're celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ. I'm going back to Luke Chapter 2.

""Luke 2:10-11

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.""

The angel tells the shepherds out in the field that a Savior is born this day. This Savior is Christ the Lord. This should bring us a great joy!

We Should Have Great Joy But This Flesh Stops Us

""Luke 2:12-14

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.""

Imagine that. I love the words of the Bible. "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God!" Hey, we need to take a step back from all the things the world gives us during Christmas time. And we need to focus on the real reason that we have Christmas.

Glory to God IN THE HIGHEST, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

All glory, praise, and honor goes to God. Many men and women lift themselves up in this world and especially in the churches. We don't do that here. There's nothing special about me. Instead, glory to God in the highest. We decrease. We die. Jesus increases.

Jesus is the one who brings peace. Jesus is the one who brings good will toward all men in all nations in all the earth. "ON EARTH peace, good will toward men." Thank God. God is a great God and he wants good for us.

""Luke 2:15-16

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16 And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.""

""Luke 2:17-18

And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18 And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.""

Good Tidings of Great Joy = The Gospel of Jesus Christ

The good tidings of great joy is brought to us by Jesus Christ. It is the good news. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We have to realize that we all will die one day. That's not good news. It is certain we will all die. If we had to worry about that, we wouldn't have any joy. Many people don't think about death, but it's coming.

Jesus is the only one who can save us from death. That baby was born that day so that we don't have to worry about death at all. When death comes, it's something to be scared of if you don't know Jesus Christ.

Without Jesus Christ, eternal hell and damnation is the destination according to the Bible. But God wants you in heaven so He sent Jesus Christ to be born in that manger. Because of Jesus, we don't have to worry about death.

As death gets closer and closer for me in this life, I have more and more peace. I know that when I die, I will be going straight to heaven with Jesus. I also don't believe I will have any pain when that happens. My body will die, but my soul will go straight to heaven because of Jesus Christ. My death is going to be a great day. I will see Jesus.

And it's going to be that same Jesus Christ that was born that night. The same Jesus that the shepherds found lying in a manger.

That's why we have peace. That's why we have joy. We know where we're going. We know a little of what God has in store for us in heaven. But we know it's going to be better than anything we could ever imagine. And all thanks goes to God.

There's a song that I love called "The Holy Hills of Heaven Call Me." Yeah, the HOLY hills of heaven call me. We don't even have a clue how great heaven will be. But I can't wait. And I'm seeing all of you there. If you get there first, wait for me. I'll see you soon. If I get there first, I'll wait for you and greet you upon arrival with Jesus. I can't wait to see you in heaven.

The Holy Hills of Heaven Call Me

Listen to the words of this song:

The holy hills of Heaven call me
To mansions bright across the sea
Where loved ones wait and crowns are given
And the hills of home keep calling me

This house of flesh is but a prison
Bars of bone are holding my soul
But the doors of clay are gonna burst wide open
When the angel sets my spirit free

I'll take my flight like a mighty eagle
When the hills of home start calling me
I'll take my flight like a mighty eagle
When the hills of home start calling me

I see loved ones over yonder
Tears are gone and hearts are free
And from the throne king Jesus beckons
Oh the hills of home are calling me

This House of Flesh Is But A Prison

That's my favorite part. Imagine this at your death. I don't know exactly what it's going to be like, but getting rid of this sinful flesh is going to be great. I don't want to leave you all, but there's a time I will go. And when I go, "I'll take my flight like a mighty eagle."

I know I don't deserve heaven. Listen to these Scriptures. And this is all possible because of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the good tidings of great joy. What a Savior we have in Jesus.

""Luke 16:19-21

There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.""

You and I are like that beggar full of sores. We just need a few crumbs from the rich man's table. The rich men of this world are the high and lifted up who think themselves to be something. There's a lot of those people in the churches. I've seen it. High and lifted up. They think themselves to be the Lord's anointed, the chosen one, the king.

But Jesus is the Lord's anointed. We are beggars. We are from the dust of the earth. We are low. As low as you can get. We are full of sores.

""Luke 16:22-23

And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.""

The Lowest of the Lowest Are Exalted by Jesus

The part I want you to see is right there at the beginning. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died." The lowest of the lowest. Not the mighty man. Not the high and lifted up rich man who cared about his money, his food, his expensive things. The lowest.

This world knocks this area that we live in. They want to put us down here. We'll take it. We'll be the lowest of the low. You can have that high and mighty spot you want. And all because of Jesus Christ, what happened to the lowest of the low, that beggar? Look closely.

"And was carried by the angels." He was carried right into heaven to be with Abraham. Carried by the angels. When I die, I'm going to take that flight. My angels are carrying me home. I don't know how to get my soul to heaven when my body dies, but I don't need to. I've believed. The angels are taking me home.

"The holy hills of heaven call me. To mansions bright across the sea." Imagine that. "Where loved ones wait and crowns are given." When it's time, I'll see loved ones over yonder. They won't be far off any more. Tears are gone and hearts are free. No more burden. No more pain. No more broken hearts. We'll finally be free.

From the Throne King Jesus Beckons

When it's time, we'll see Jesus there on the throne that's his. "And from the throne King Jesus beckons." He says, "It's time as he motions to come." And when he beckons, it's time to go. He's King. He's always been King. He is our King. Thank God. And I can't wait to see him.

What a night that would have been for those shepherds that were keeping watch over their flock by night. What a night that would have been. The angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them. And they were sore afraid.

"Fear not." Thank God it was fear not. "For behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you THIS DAY in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Hey, that's an amazing night right there. The shepherds go with haste and they find Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus lying in a manger just as the angel of the Lord said. What a night. And when they saw it, they made known abroad the saying which was told concerning this child.

A Savior is born. The Christ is here. It's no one else but Jesus. We celebrate this Christmas. We celebrate Jesus and His first coming into this world as God in the flesh. We thank God for everything. What great joy and peace we can have all because of Jesus Christ.

TRUE WORDS
Baptist Church 
Revelation 21:5

Sunday Evening

22 December 2024

We don't have to fear death any more. He saved us. I know where I'm going. You know where you're going. And we need to keep this in mind. There are only better days ahead. Great days to come. Thank you Jesus! Thank you for coming into this world to save us.

Thank you so much for the good tidings of great joy!

Let's pray.