

# SPREADING CHRISTMAS JOY

Luke 2:8-14

**INTRODUCTION:** The world could stand a little joy. Maybe you could use some joy yourself. Joy is something we all long for in our lives. The angel announced the good news of great joy for the Savior is born. Christmas joy is ours all year long, if we are saved. We need to spread that Christmas joy to all people.

Pastor and theologian D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote of the need for joy and hope as a witness in the world: "If ever the world needed the witness and testimony of Christian people, it is at this present time. The world is unhappy, it is distracted and frightened, and what it needs is to see stars shining out of the heavens in the midst of the darkness, attracting the world by rebuking that darkness, and by giving it light, showing how it too can live that quality of life." He died in 1981. I wonder what he would say today if he was still living.

Some of our favorite Christmas carols mention joy in their lyrics such as, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," "O Come, All Ye Faithful," and "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." One of the most popular of all Christmas songs is "Joy to the World." It begins with "Joy to the world, the Lord is come." He has indeed come as Savior and is the soon coming King who will reign forever!

## I. SAVIOR IS GOOD NEWS

### A. PREDICTION OF JESUS' FIRST COMING.

Bible prophecies record in detail two great world events. Those events are the first coming of Jesus Christ and His second coming. His first coming has already been fulfilled. We wait for His blessed appearance the second time. We can see in detail about Jesus' miraculous birth, life, death and resurrection. This can be read all through the Old Testament.

The Old Testament predicted that Jesus would be born of a virgin in the city of Bethlehem and that He would later be betrayed and crucified. There are other prophecies that Jesus fulfilled right down to the most precise detail.

### B. PURPOSE OF JESUS' FIRST COMING.

While there are many reasons for His first coming, we can sum them up in the fact Jesus came to reveal the Heavenly Father and redeem sinners. When Jesus was born, the angels announced "good tidings of great joy" to the shepherds. (Luke 2:10) At his birth, Jesus brought joy into the world. There were four hundred years between the last book of the Old Testament and the first book of the New Testament. Israel had long waited for their Messiah and our Savior.

## II. SALVATION IS GOOD NEWS

### A. GOSPEL OF SALVATION.

The meaning of the word "gospel" is good news. Jesus is good news. He came to this earth to offer hope and salvation. Salvation brings great joy to those who come to faith in Jesus. He came to rescue and save those who are lost. The "good news" is Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sin. The gospel of Christ brings forgiveness and joy to those who repent and trust in Him.

### B. GIFT OF SALVATION.

The angel proclaimed "unto you is born this day." Salvation is a personal gift "unto you." The gift of salvation is by grace. The fact that God offers us salvation as a free gift through faith in Christ is good news beyond description. Joy is the outflow of a heart that has experienced new life in Christ. The weight of sin is lifted. The guilty sinner is freed from sin's punishment. The person who will repent and receive Jesus as his

Savior is forgiven of his sin. Heaven is filled with joy when a sinner comes to Christ. "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." (Luke 15:10)

### **III. SPREADING GOOD NEWS**

#### **A. SEEDS OF THE GOSPEL.**

"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." (Luke 8:1) Jesus went to every city and village spreading the good news. He preached the good news of the kingdom of God. On Jesus' first tour of Galilee, He preached the gospel of the kingdom of God, "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15)

In Luke 4:18-19, we read that Jesus went into the synagogue at Nazareth and shared from Isaiah 61:1-2 the prophecy concerning His ministry. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19) The gospels are full of the miracles Jesus performed and the people He blessed. In Acts 10:38 it is stated, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." (Acts 10:38)

The Lord sent His disciples everywhere preaching the gospel and establishing churches. The Bible teaches us in the book of Acts that the early followers of Christ spread the gospel. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (Acts 8:4) Philip went down to the city of Samaria where he preached Christ and performed miracles. The Bible says that there was great joy in the city. The greatest gift you can share with someone is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Spreading the gospel brings love, hope, and joy into the lives of people who need a good dose of all three. When the gospel spread in the days of the early church, joy followed the message. (Acts 8:8; 1 Thessalonians 1:6) Jesus brought joy to the world at His first coming to earth as a baby, and He will bring joy to the world when He comes again to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. (Revelation 19:16)

#### **B. SPIRIT OF JOY.**

Every Christian has the indwelling Holy Spirit, but not every Christian is under His control. Joy is the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," (Galatians 5:22). Joy is not based on circumstances. The Greek word for "joy" is related to the Greek word for "grace." God bestows grace on us. We experience joy in our Christian lives by giving ourselves completely over to Jesus and accepting His gift of grace. Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:1)

A person can have happiness and joy at the same time. Happiness is based on material things or events, such as when a person is given a gift at Christmas or celebrates a birthday. Joy is from God and can be experienced even during times of trials. We have joy from knowing God as our Heavenly Father and Jesus as our Savior. We can rejoice over what God has done and is doing in our lives. Joy flows from our hearts knowing that He is constantly caring for us.

#### **C. SPREADING THE JOY.**

We may not be able to perform miracles, but we can share the gospel and minister to hurting and lonely people. A positive outlook and encouraging words from the Lord can be an extension of God's joy.

This Christmas you can let others experience God's love through you. Every time you lend a hand, offer a smile and spread the joy in your heart, you are showing the love of Jesus. Everyone you meet can use a little more joy in his or her life. Your words of grace and acts of kindness will make their day and yours a little brighter. Make this Christmas special for someone else by finding ways you can give and share.

I received a phone call from Carl Anderson this morning thanking the Lord for those who came to his house Christmas caroling Thursday evening. He wanted me to thank each of you who came to sing and the church family. We can share the spirit of joy with others in many different ways. You can bear someone else's burden and ease their load.

**Lessons for Life:**

1. Christmas is the message of God giving Jesus to be our Savior.
2. Christmas is all of us spreading God's message to the world.
3. Sharing the joy of the Lord with others will increase your joy.
4. Give the Lord your heart and soul this Christmas.
5. A Christmas prayer for you: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Romans 15:13)