

“Joy”

Introduction

- Continuing our Advent series
 - HOPE (1st week), Peace (2nd week), Joy (3rd week) and Love (Final week). Jesus came to a world in need.
 - Our ‘normal’ view of Joy is not the Biblical/Kingdom view
 - JOY, NOT happiness - happiness fluctuates based on circumstances - Joy is a condition; it’s something that lives inside of us; its a fruit of the Spirit - sometimes we need reminded we need to agree with the joy that is in us; it’s based on the fact that The light shone in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
 - Without Jesus there is no joy(Repeat)

Luke 2:8-20 New International Version (NIV)

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 that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

- “Good news that will cause great JOY for all the people
 - Joy is not happiness, happiness comes from our circumstances, Joy comes from Jesus
 - Our joy comes from Jesus
 - His birth, death, resurrection, ascension and now he lives forever
 - All of this so that we could get into heaven and so that heaven can get into us
 - Scripture states that the Lord makes his home in us= heaven in us
 - The angels announce this joy here in Luke
 - Joy to the world
 - Jesus is this JOY

Worship Note: Joy comes from Jesus

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

- In scripture all scenes in Heaven depict angels and all the heavenly host praising and glorifying the Lord. (Revelation, prophets, etc.)
- In the Lord's presence no being can help but worship the Lord
- Here we also hear the angels declare 'peace to those 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."
 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.
 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Where were the shepherds going after seeing the baby Jesus?

"Back to their blue collar, 3rd shift jobs"

- Despised occupation; lowest of the low
- Seeing Jesus let them know and believe there was a future greater than their present reality - they had hope
- But they also Had joy
 - They knew intellectually they were heading back to their blue collar, 3rd shift jobs, yet they had joy - the shift was in their hearts and in their heads

Romans 2:23 - "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will."

- Repentance means you change your way of thinking
 - "Most Christians repent enough to get forgiven, but not enough to see the Kingdom" -Bill Johnson
 - The renewed mind is a result of a surrendered heart
 - Also Bill Johnson "Hidden sin is the Achilles heal of the Church in this hour."
- Often the battle for joy happens between our ears

Worship Note: Our joy should not be dependent on circumstances

Rejoicing in a Haitian Tent Camp Teaches Us About Faith

Richard Stearns, the president of World Vision, reflected on his visit to a church in Port-au-Prince, Haiti nearly a year after the devastating earthquake. The church's building consisted of a tent made from white tarps and duct tape, pitched in the midst of a sprawling camp for thousands of people still homeless from the earthquake. This is how he describes the church and the lesson he learned in Haiti:

In the front row sat six amputees ranging in age from 6 to 60. They were clapping and smiling as they sang song after song and lifted their prayers to God. The worship was full of hope ... [and] with thanksgiving to the Lord.

No one was singing louder or praying more fervently than Demosi Louphine, a 32-year-old unemployed single mother of two. During the earthquake, a collapsed building crushed her right arm and left leg. After four days both limbs had to be amputated.

She was leading the choir, leading prayers, standing on her prosthesis and lifting her one hand high in praise to God Following the service, I met Demosi's two daughters, ages eight and ten. The three of them now live in a tent five feet tall and perhaps eight feet wide. Despite losing her job, her home, and two limbs, she is deeply grateful because God spared her life on January 12th last year ... "He brought me back like Lazarus, giving me the gift of life," says Demosi ... [who] believes she survived the devastating quake for two reasons: to raise her girls and to serve her Lord for a few more years.

It makes no sense to me as an "entitled American" who grouses at the smallest inconveniences—a clogged drain or a slow wi-fi connection in my home. Yet here in this place, many people who had lost everything ... expressed nothing but praise.

Richard Stearns, "Suffering and Rejoicing in a Haitian Tent Camp," Christianitytoday.com (1-12-11)

Worship

- After seeing Jesus the shepherds were filled with JOY
- Their JOY led to WORSHIP
 - V.20 'glorifying and praising God'
- After seeing Jesus the shepherds couldn't help but praising and worshipping the Lord.

Worship Note: Joy leads to praise and worship.

Lord's Joy

Nehemiah 8:10 (NIV)

10 Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

- 'Joy of the Lord is your strength'
 - What is 'joy of the Lord'?
 - What brings the Lord joy?
 - True worship= John 4:23-24 (NIV)
23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

Worship Note: True worship brings the Lord joy

- Believers worship
 - Our true worship brings the Lord joy and touches him
 - Imagine that our worship touches the Lord, WE CAN TOUCH THE LORD
 - We love it when we can feel his presence and touch
 - How awesome is it that 'little ole us' can touch The Father
 - Woman who had been hemorrhaging for 12 years touched Jesus and was made whole
 - Worship and sporting events
 - I'm not saying that when you come to church you need to give each other high fives or do cartwheels down the aisle, but worship is a time of anticipation and expectation. We come together because all week God has been knocking home runs and scoring touchdowns in our lives. Worship is a time to celebrate what God has done for us.
- What is True Worship?

- In the presence of the Lord the Bible tells us that 'every knee shall bow and every tongue confess'
- In the presence of the glory of the Lord all things worship Him
- True worship, 'In Spirit and in truth', is worship without seeing his glory and worshipping him in the midst of trials
- It's easy to worship the Lord when you see his glory and his presence is manifested, when we are in the midst of trial and tribulations it is much harder
 - James 1:2 'Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds,'
- 'Sacrifice of Praise'
 - Hebrews 13:15-16 Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.
 - God desires us to praise him
 - He is pleased with our praise/worship= it brings him joy
- Asking 'How is it that our worship can touch the Lord/bring him joy?'
- Cyclical, like the Water Cycle
 - Jesus brings us Joy (birth, life, death, resurrection, ascension)
 - Our joy leads to worship, just like the shepherds and magi
 - When we worship the Lord in Spirit and Truth, amidst trials and suffering, it brings him Joy
 - Then the Joy of the Lord gives us strength!!!
- Corporate worship
 - "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."™
Matthew 18:20 NIV
 - Something released during corporate worship= Holy Spirit
 - Can worship alone definitely and need to
 - Holy Spirit came, released in corporate setting
- BRING YOUR WORSHIP!!!
 - Robert always talks about it

earth grew dark. The emotion of the Father was so great that I did not think I could have survived if I had beheld this scene for more than the brief moment that I did.

Then I was in a different place, beholding a worship service in a little church building. As sometimes happens in a prophetic experience, I just seemed to know everything about everyone in the battered little room. All were experiencing severe trials in their lives, but they were not even thinking of them here. They were not praying about their needs. They were all trying to compose songs of thanksgiving to the Lord. They were happy, and their joy was sincere.

THE CALL

I saw heaven, and all of heaven was weeping. I then saw the Father again and knew why heaven was weeping. They were weeping because of the tears in the eyes of the Father. This little group of seemingly beaten down, struggling people had moved God so deeply that He wept. They were not tears of pain, but of joy. When I saw the love that He felt for these few worshipers, I could not contain my own tears.

Nothing I had experienced gripped me more than this scene. Worshiping the Lord on earth was now more desirable to me than dwelling in all of the glory of heaven. I knew that I had been given a message that could help prepare the saints for the battles that remained on earth, but now this did not mean nearly as much to me as trying to convey how we could touch the Father. Genuine adoration expressed by even the most humble believer on earth could cause all of heaven to rejoice, but even more than that, it touches the Father. This is why the angels would rather be given charge over a single believer on the earth than to be given authority over many galaxies of stars.

I saw Jesus standing next to the Father. Beholding the joy of the Father as He watched the little prayer meeting, He turned to me and said, "This is why I went to the cross. Giving My Father joy for just one moment would have been worth it all. Your worship can cause Him joy every day. Your worship when you are in the midst of difficulties touches Him even more than all of the worship of heaven. Here, where His glory is seen, the angels cannot help but to worship. When you worship without seeing His glory in the midst of your trials, that is worship in Spirit and in truth." The

Father seeks such to be His worshipers. Do not waste your trials. Worship the Father, not for what you will receive, but to bring Him joy. You will never be stronger than when you bring Him joy, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Verse

Believer's Worship =
Father's Joy!

Closing

- Worship during this time, knowing how our worship touches the Lord
- If you have let circumstances steal your joy and if there big enough to do that than big enough to get prayer