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Joy to a Broken World
Luke 2:1-12
Dec 13, 2015, Adrian Moskal

Let's Pray:

Heavenly Father, we want to hear from you this morning, I pray that we will be changed this morning by your word, through the Holy Spirit. Help us to understand and to choose Joy this morning, to choose to walk with you Lord Jesus.

We have been going through the weeks of Advent. Simply put we are celebrating what Christ brought and continues to bring to the world through his presence. In week 1 we lit the candle of Hope because Christ is the hope of all people. Last week we talked about peace and if there is a more timely period in my life that the message of Christ's Peace is more needed, I don't know when that is. The world needs God's peace more than ever right now.

This morning, I want to talk about Joy. Joy is tough because the world bombards us with images and terms and we can get confused by what joy really means. When we think of Joy, one of the words that pops into our minds is often happiness.

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Dictionary.com describes happiness as this:

Happiness

1. the quality or state of being [happy](#).
2. good fortune; pleasure; contentment; joy.

Happiness results from the possession or attainment of what one considers good: *the happiness of visiting one's family*.

Your happiness is dependent on pleasure, or experiencing good fortune. Often the commercials tell you happiness is from buying or "attaining" a new car, home, jewelry, electronic device, etc, etc, etc.

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How does this differ from Joy?

Holman New Testament Commentary has the following definition of joy:

joy—The inner attitude of rejoicing in one's salvation regardless of outward circumstances.

It is amazing when you dig deeper into the meaning of words how it can change your understanding. Joy and happiness are not the synonyms we may have thought.

Joy: The inner attitude of rejoicing in one's salvation regardless of outward circumstances. It can fit

the definition of happiness to a degree if we look at Jesus as our good fortune and if we are content in Jesus no matter our circumstances but joy is a matter of perspective.

Let's remember this definition as we go.

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Luke 2:1-7 ESV

² In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

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*⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. ⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, **because there was no place for them in the inn.***

So lets dig deeper and try to actually picture what this was like to experience. Today, when we take a census, the government goes door-to-door and collects the information. The information has many uses, but one use is the amount of tax dollars each province and community receives.

In this case, Rome is taking a census and each family has to travel back to the town of their heritage. Joseph was from the line of David and his hometown was Bethlehem. Therefore, there was this mass migration of people going to register including Joseph and his pregnant wife Mary.

The passage says there is no place for them in the inn. Inn could also mean guest room. It is uncertain. Either way, if you are talking about a room at a hotel, or a guest room at a relative's house, the fact is Jesus was born among the animals.

Joseph and Mary show up along with lots of visiting people and there is no room in the inn, in family guestrooms, and all that they can muster is a barn. When we sing "Away in a Manger" it seems intimate, warm and cozy because we don't understand what a manger is. A manger is a feeding trough for animals. They wrapped up baby Jesus (the Newborn King) and placed him in a feeding trough because there was nothing else for them.

Let's assume its an actual inn and look at this from the point of view of the innkeeper.

Do we have any business owners here or if you used to own a business? Can I get you to put your hands up?

Yes, there are some people. You see, I feel for the innkeeper here. I used to own my own business and it can be tough. It can be long hours, trying to eek out a living. There are pressures of staff if it is a large enough business. There are pressures of generating enough income to cover expenses and hopefully extra so your family can eat and live.

If you were this innkeeper, you would expect that this would be a busy time. Bethlehem is not a major city or town. Not a lot of flow through traffic. As the owner of an inn, you fill up the rooms that you have and here comes Mary and Joseph looking for a room. There is nothing left. But, that young lady, Mary, she sure looks pregnant. So you give them all you have...they can stay with the animals. It is the best that you can do. I feel for him.

Don't you feel for him a little? Let's see what happens next.

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Luke 2:8-12 ESV

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear.

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¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "**Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.**" ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. The good news is that Jesus Christ is born and that brings great joy to all who hear it. It will turn out to be the biggest event in history, the birth of Jesus, and you had no room for him. What is a guy to do? Is this any different than the average Joe? You and I?

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1. This leads me to my first point: Our lives can get so busy that we forget about Jesus or we put him into our barn with the animals. Our lives are so busy that Jesus is not our first thought, or 2nd or 3rd.

This is a time of year that can be so busy and so commercialized that we forget what it is all about. We have gifts to buy and wrap, kids Christmas recitals, office Christmas parties, end of the year stuff, etc. We can lose sight of the fact that we are celebrating this good news of great joy that is for all the people. It is not an event. It is a person. We are celebrating Jesus.

Jesus is a "game changer". By that, I mean, he changes everything.

So, let's see how he changes everything:

When Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant with her son, John the Baptist, she spent time with Mary after she recently was pregnant with Jesus. When the two came together this is what happened:

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Luke 1:44 ESV

⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

John the Baptist leaps for Joy as he comes into contact with Jesus while they are still in the womb.

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Matthew 2:10-11 ESV

¹⁰ When they saw the star, **they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy.** ¹¹ And going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, **and they fell down and worshiped him.** Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

The wise men could do nothing but rejoice when they got close to Christ.

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This is my second point of 6.

2. You can't help but be filled with joy when you meet Jesus.

This is what Jesus does. He brings joy. We are not talking about following a set of rules, doctrine, or beliefs. Joy comes when you meet Christ, put your trust in him, and follow him. It is about a relationship with him.

A few weeks ago I was able to experience joy in new birth and in death. Let me explain. Ron and Heather Chiu, who are in my growth group, gave birth to their fourth child. My wife and I were able to go up to the hospital and hold their new baby girl an hour and a half after she was born. There was much rejoicing. There had been some concern about the pregnancy and therefore much prayer had been asked and given for her safe arrival. Her name is Isabelle Hope. We are rejoicing because God created her, gifted her and gave her to Ron and Heather. There was much joy in that room as we gave thanks to God for her and Heather's health.

The same week I officiated the funeral for Doris Braithwaite. It is sad when you are grieving the loss of a loved one. We don't minimize the loss. The "good news" is that because she loved Jesus and put her faith in Christ, that she is no longer in pain but with Christ. We were able to rejoice how she had met Christ and gave her life to Christ and now is with him experiencing eternal joy in heaven.

This good news brings joy not just in the happy moments but also in the tough, messy and sad moments.

And....it's not just busyness that gets in the way of us finding joy in Christ. What about pain, suffering, hardship, trial, struggle, sickness, and grieving? How do I find joy in these circumstances?

The bible has a lot to say about joy and suffering.

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1 Thes 5:16-18

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Phil 4:4 ESV

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

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James 1:2 ESV

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,

Acts 5:41 ESV

⁴¹ Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name.

The apostles rejoiced that they got to suffer for the name of Jesus.

Let's remember our definition of joy at the beginning:

Joy: The inner attitude of rejoicing in one's salvation regardless of outward circumstances.

Even after Jesus left the Apostles and ascended to heaven, there was joy.

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Luke 24:51-52 ESV

⁵¹ While he blessed them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy

In all of these cases there is loss, or pain, or suffering but the bible tells us we can **choose** joy in all circumstances when we have Christ.

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This is my 3rd point:

In our suffering, there isn't happiness, but we can choose to have Joy in Christ.

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Now if it just stopped there, it would still be depressing. It would be depressing to do this alone. We live in a broken world. We have trials and struggles and to have someone just say: choose joy, seems trite and insensitive. But Christ says, I will walk with you.

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Hebrews 13:5b-6

I will never leave you nor forsake you.”⁶ So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

We have nothing to fear because Christ will not leave us and will help us. When we put our faith in him and walk with him he will walk with us. This is great news.

Gal 5:22 ESV

*²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

Even after he ascended to heaven he gave us his Spirit to lead us. When we give our lives to Christ, we get his Spirit and one of the fruit or gifts of the Spirit is Joy.

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This is our fourth point:

Jesus will not leave in your struggle but walk with you and bring you joy.

It is not just 2000 years ago that Jesus brought Joy to a broken world. He brings it to us today and through us today.

We hear the uproar of businesses, schools, and government that they are taking Christ out of Christmas. They change Merry Christmas to Happy Holidays. Why this upsets us, I am not clear. So, let me be clear, it isn't the mandate or the job of those who don't know Jesus to keep him in Christmas.

Christians need to own the fact, we represent Christ, we are his ambassadors. We don't have to just keep Christ in Christmas, we need him in our lives each and every day and each and every hour, minute and second. We need to take him out of the stable and out of the manger and put him in the best room in our house. Jesus needs to be at the centre of our lives.

For those who have a relationship with Christ, it is not just words and symbols but action. How do you do that? Let's see:

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2 Cor 1:3,4 ESV

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

What is the source of your greatest pain or weakness? If we allow Him, God will use our struggles and weaknesses to bless others and bring them joy.

Could Jesus use your failed relationship, failed business, health problems, wayward child, or your abortion to bless someone else? Could he use our deepest darkest issue to bring compassion and his

joy to someone in need?

I can have empathy for business owners who are having a hard time or struggle financially. I have walked in those shoes. I may not know exactly what they are going through, but my experience of closing our business allows that empathy to show through when talking about similar things with others.

It is a matter of living it out.

Putting Christ in Christmas is one of action not just words. Who can you serve, help, comfort? Who is Christ calling you to love?

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5th point – The follower of Christ is called to bring compassion and joy to others.

And lastly, and I might even say most importantly, Christ is the good news. We celebrate advent season by celebrating what Jesus brings into the world. If you do not have a relationship with Christ, he is asking you to trust him. He came for you 2000 years ago, lived a perfect life, he died on a cross for you, and rose again conquering sin and death.

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John 3:16-17 ESV

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Did you come this morning and know some things about who God is but don't have a relationship with him? A relationship is one where you talk to him, where your hope and trust is in him and him alone. I understand this place. I remember when I first came to church. I was an adult, a business owner, a husband, and knew about God and some stories in the bible but I did not have a relationship with Christ. I could be happy but was without the joy that can only come from Jesus. I did not have the eternal hope that only comes from a relationship with Christ.

I did not believe in Christ. I had not put my trust in him. This is why he came. This is the good news. This is the joy that the angels were talking about.

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Luke 2:10-12

*¹⁰And the angel said to them, “**Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.** ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”*

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Jesus came down and made his dwelling among us because we need him. We are broken, the world is broken and only he can bring joy in this world. It does not end in the manger. Jesus goes on to live a sinless life, dies on a cross, rises again after 3 days and conquers sin and death. He makes a way for us to have a relationship with God the Father and go to heaven. We just have to put our trust in him. We need to trust who he is and what he has done is enough. This is why Jesus bring Joy to a broken world.

My 6th and last point:

This good news of great joy is open for you today. You can pray and ask Christ into your life and to lead you today.

Let's pray.