

Advent – Joy – Sermon

Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room
And Heaven and nature sing

Joy to the World, the Lord is come

The first step to receiving joy is actually **Realizing** that the Lord **has** come.

- **Luke 2:8-11** Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.
- The main message of Advent is that Jesus Christ was born. God Himself became a child and lived as one of us. He became our savior.
 - That's why we have Nativity scenes. It's why we watch a Charlie Brown Christmas. Christmas is celebrating the birth of Christ. God came into this world.
 - Jesus came into this world. He died for us. He rose again.
 - By His life we are saved.
 - And because He came, He knows what it is to be like us. He can empathize with us for all situations.
 - **Hebrews 4:15-16** For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- The second message of Advent is that Christ **will** come. We actually celebrate the Second coming in advent and declare that one day we will all see Jesus again face to face.
 - So why we don't have apocalypse scenes or bowl of wrath calendars, I don't know, but that is part of the advent message.
 - But the future prospect of heaven and all its glory should bring joy to us.
- But the wording in this song is not past tense and it's not future tense. It is present tense. It reads "Joy to the World, the Lord **IS** come."
 - I don't know if this is just because the author had bad grammar, but I believe it is because it reveals a truth. He is here, right now, with us.

The Christmas message is not just He has come and He will come again, but that He is come. He is with us:

- **Matthew 1:23** "*Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,*" which is translated, "God with us."

One of the main differences between Christianity and all other false religions is Immanuel.

- Our God loved us so much that He became one of us so that we may come and eternally be with Him.
- And that He continually gives His life to us that we may always be united with Him.
- **John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."
- We have covered recently Us in Christ and Christ in us, so I won't dwell on that. But Christ in us is enough to bring joy into our lives.

Let earth receive her King

The second part is to actually **Receive** your King

- There is a difference between recognizing that Jesus is here, and receiving Him in your life.
- We use a phrase as Christians all the time – Receive Jesus into your heart. Do we actually know what that means?
- There is a difference between knowing God is your comforter and knowing Him AS your comforter.
 - Ex – Me realizing Jesus loves me
- I believe that in whatever situation we are in, there are 2 realities happening at the same time – the physical and the spiritual. Or you could say the temporal and the eternal. Or, above the line and below the line.

Revelation 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

- This verse was written to a church – to believers.
- There should not be a disconnect in our lives between what we know about who God is and how we experience Him. If there is, there may be a receiving problem.
- The Greek word for faith is *pisteuo* which means “to believe to the extent of complete trust and reliance on”

Jesus brings joy. But getting a gift is not the same as receiving the gift.

- If you get a gift and never open it, it does not benefit you.
- We often know in our heads that Jesus is Lord, healer, provider, sustainer, comforter – But then when we need those things, we immediately look elsewhere.
- Rely on Him. He gave us the Holy Spirit for a reason.

How can you receive Jesus? By relying on Him. Go beyond the head knowledge of who God is and expect to experience Him that way.

Paul & Silas in prison

Acts 16:23-26 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. ²⁴ Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. ²⁵ But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

- Their default was to worship.
- Why? Because they had learned to rely on Him
- They had joy in this situation.

Let every heart prepare Him room

Besides realizing that Jesus is here with us, and then actually receiving Him into our situation – do we make **Room** for Him in our everyday lives?

- **Mark 4:18-19** Now these are the ones sown among thorns; *they are* the ones who hear the word, ¹⁹ and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.
- This is from the parable of the sower. The main point Jesus was making with this specific section was that we have to make room for Him in our everyday lives.
 - Cares of this world – just getting caught up with what is important to this world, but not necessarily truly important.
 - Deceitfulness of riches – The number one deceit of riches is that if we have enough money, we do not need God.
 - Desires for other things - #1 commandment – Have no other gods before Me. What is more important in our lives than God?
- How do we make room for God?
 - Spend time with Him

- Be aware of His presence
- Consider Him
- Remove distractions
- Are you able to spend time alone with God and be ok?
- Abide – **John 15:5** “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (Joy is a fruit)

If we fill all of our time with stuff of the world, do not wonder why you are not experiencing the fullness of the Christian life. This isn’t putting you under legalism, this is setting you free of the bondage of the world.

Let Heaven and Nature Sing

This is our **Response**

Generally when the Bible speaks of singing it is specifically talking about praising God. Worship.

But our worship is more than just sending sweet songs to Heaven. It’s an encounter with God. Hebrews says we enter in boldly into the throne room of Heaven. Worship is about being with God and ascribing Him what is due Him.

When we recognize that Jesus is with us. When we receive Him into our lives. When we actually make room for Him and spend time with Him – we will be filled with Joy. And worship will be our response.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— ¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ The LORD God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.

In closing:

Recognize – God is with us. He is Immanuel. He is also Jehovah Shammah

Receive – Don't just know about God or know about His presence. Invite Him into whatever you are in to.

Room – Make sure there is room in your life for God. Better yet, make sure that God is actually in every aspect of your life so there is no space where He isn't.

Respond – Give worship back to Him. Allow the praises to come out of you like how David had praises well up from inside of him.

We will go through stuff in this life. But we can choose how we experience that stuff. If we were alone, we wouldn't have a choice. But thank God He is in us. But if we do not recognize, receive and make room for Him, our response will not be joy. At best, we are giving up our choice, or at worst choosing pain, trauma, stress and depression over God, whether consciously or unconsciously. Choose joy. Choose Jesus.