

Sermon 12-23-18 Luke 1:39-45 Time for Joy!

Dear Disciples at the manger of the Christchild:

What would make you leap for joy?

- Hearing great news from your doctor
- Finding the right place to live
- Receiving a great report card
- Turning 21 years old
- Graduating from college

One of the commands repeated over and over again in the Bible is “Rejoice!”

Rejoice!

- It means to be happy
- It means to jump for joy
- It means to have joy and to express joy

Each one of us here today has a reason to be joyful...

- Did not God wake each of us up this morning to live another day?
- Is not the Lord on our side every moment of our life?
- Has not the Lord adopted us as His own?

Psalm 37:4 “Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”

Luke 6:23 “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven.”

Christmas is to be a time of joy....is it? Surveys tells us that many people believe the Christmas season to be more stressful than going through a divorce or being robbed. Why? Stress may come when we...

- Try to plan the perfect family meal
- Try to find the perfect present

- Try to keep the peace with our in-laws
- Try to get all of the shopping, Christmas cards and family get-together planning done by 3:00 PM on December 24th.
- Through all of this we are to REJOICE!
- Tips for less stress: Plan ahead, shop-online, eat Turkey (calming chemicals) drink decaf coffee, exercise, know when to stop

Some say there is more stress because more and more people are taking “Christ” out of Christmas...they haven’t kept the connection between this celebration and the birth of their Savior.

In Luke 1:39ff we have an example of a baby in the womb jumping for joy upon hearing the great news that the Savior of world would soon be born. In the Bible we are told that the Angel Gabriel appears to a young Jewish woman named Mary. Mary is told that she would become the mother of Jesus. She is also told that her cousin Elizabeth is pregnant, too.

Mary wastes no time but hurried to pay a visit to Elizabeth.

- She travels from her own city of Nazareth to the hill country of Judea
- She hardly expected the kind of welcome she received from Elizabeth.
- Luke says that the Holy Spirit “filled” the soul of Elizabeth and she said to Mary: “Blessed are you among women...”

Blessed are you among women...

Elizabeth knew this truth because of a special revelation by the Holy Spirit. The child in Elizabeth’s womb joins in the praise of God by leaping for joy.

Elizabeth recognized the privilege conferred on Mary to God.

- She recognized the position of the Son whom Mary would later give birth to
- She referred to the Son as “My Lord” which was the Old Testament messianic title for the Savior.
- She proclaimed that Mary was to be the mother of the Messiah
- This was revealed to her by the Holy Spirit

- Elizabeth then explained what authenticated the revelation to her in v44
- The baby in her womb (John the Baptist) leapt for joy

This movement was not the natural prenatal movement but was John's response in recognition of the position to which Mary had been set apart by God.

Why should we leap for joy?

Jesus once said: **“Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven.”** Luke 6:23

- I. Because Jesus came born of a virgin to destroy death

Death is all around us but do we really understand death?

- Why should people die at age 70-80 or 90. Why shouldn't they live until age 700-800 or 900?
- Why should people die at all?
- Medical advancements may eliminate many of the diseases that lead to death but they cannot cure the greater disease of death itself.
- Our greatest fear is the fear of death
- Our greatest grief is grief over the death of a loved one
- Death is our greatest enemy and the cry of our souls mirrors what Job cried in the Old Testament:

“If a man die, shall he live again?”

The Bible tells us that death came into our world because of sin. God became one of us and died in our place to take death away from us.

God created life. He is the only One who can defeat death. Deliverance from death requires deliverance from sin. This only could be accomplished by a Man who was Himself without sin, offering Himself as a sacrifice who would pay the wages of sin on behalf of all sinners.

I Peter 1:3 “Praise be to God...in his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...”

“Since we have been justified through faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace ---in which we now stand and we rejoice...” Romans 5

It all started in Bethlehem with the birth of Jesus. Death was defeated. Life was given.

Why leap for joy?

II. Because through Jesus we have the Grace of God

- I can't save myself from my brokenness
- I can't fix myself from what is broken in my life
- I can't find the solutions of life on my own
- I could never do enough good to make up for all the bad I have done
- My only hope is to repent of my sins, believe in Jesus and receive his grace

Titus 2:11 “For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men.’

Ephesians 2:7 “God’s grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

The holy God of creation must punish sin and banish sin and all of us who were lost sinners before Him. The only solution for this great dilemma is Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, born of the Virgin Mary.

We are alive in Christ because of His grace.

- Christ lived and died for me
- Christ lives in me right now Galatians 2:20

I am dead to my old life of rebellion against God and alive to a new life of fellowship and walking daily with the Lord. The life we live is now an eternal resurrection life. John 5:24

Christ’s everlasting life...

- Becomes a present possession of believers
- Transforms the quality of our lives

- Carries us through death into the presence of Christ in heaven
- Reuniting us with our resurrected bodies when Christ returns to earth
- Takes us into the endless ages of a perfected cosmos

In Christ we have real life

- The life with Christ is one of joy and peace Rom 15:13
- The life with Christ is a life of service and witness Luke 9:23
- The life with Christ is one of daily looking to him for strength and guidance Phil 4:6-7
- The life with Christ is one of encouragement and fellowship with other believers

This present age will soon be over...Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

- The real God, the God of creation became a real Man in the person of Jesus Christ
- He paid the awful price of our redemption by his death on the cross.

The story of the baby Jesus in the manger of Bethlehem cannot be separated from the cross on Golgotha. It cannot be separated from the resurrection of Jesus for through these events sin, death and Satan were defeated.

“He saved us not because of righteous things we had done but because of his mercy!” Titus 3:5

Our great enemies have been doomed. The only remedy for this sick and dying world was for the Creator Himself to intervene. This He did. God entered directly into the human family to deliver us from the bondage of sin and death.

Hebrews 2:14f “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death ---that is, the devil ---and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

Leap for joy!

- Leap for Joy, you say --- Yes most heartily amidst the dung of the stable, which is, the refuse of this world.
- Leap for Joy, yes at the foot of that ghastly cross because it is the hope of the world.

Gather around a cattle trough and celebrate a baby born in poverty and rejected because He is the Savior of the world!

Leap for Joy! Rejoice! Your Savior is Here!