



Advent Joy

Luke 2:8-20
Week of December 12, 2021

Before Connect Group

- Luke 2:8-20
 - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
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And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 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. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" "When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger.

And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Luke 2:8-20, ESV

Sermon Notes

Your intersection with the Gospel this Advent is meant to be a "great joy" that overwhelms all fear.

Adoration of Christ this Christmas through the "great Joy" we have in Him. *Jude 24 -25 Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. My hope and prayer today is that you would experience this great Joy that we see here in this text.*

Second, I find this phrase "great joy" interesting. If you were to look up "joy" in the NT, you would find that it is used 57 times . 171 in both the Old and New Testaments together. But when you modify it with the adjective "great", you reduce that to 9 times in both testaments. 6 of which we can find in the NT. 4 of those are in the Gospels. 2 of which are in Birth Narratives. *Matthew 2:10 when the Magi saw the star - "When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."* and here in *Luke 2:10*. 2 of which are immediately after the resurrection of Christ from the grave. *Matthew 28:8* When they found the tomb empty - "with fear and great joy" - , and *Luke 24* when the two disciples head back to Jerusalem after walking with Jesus on the road to Emmaus - "And they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy,". 2 in the rest of the NT. One in *Acts 15:3* when Paul was testifying of the conversion of the gentiles - "it brought great joy to all the brothers" then also in the text I have already read at the end of *Jude*.

Joy in general seems to be able to describe a breadth of situations in Scripture. It has the ability to describe jubilee in many scenarios, many of which have to do with the goodness of God. But it would seem that "great joy" is reserved for those who are in or are going to experience the glory filled presence of God. This means that it is significant that two of the six times this phrase is used, it is used at the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ. If we are going to Adore Christ this Christmas and desire to experience the "great joy" of this coming King, then we should probably look into one of these stories a bit closer.

Matthew 2:1-12 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: "'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 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. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

- In Luke there are Angels who deliver the message, whereas in Matt. 2 it is the Magi who come to Jerusalem with the message.
- In Matthew there are many other players. The Magi, King Herod, the Priests and Scribes. (each of these would be worth comparing, but not for today).
- Today, I want you to acknowledge the differences in these texts, but to follow me in the contrastive comparison I see here between the Shepherds and the King.
- As I see it, there are four main moments in this text and the one in Matthew 2, that we need to navigate this morning to grasp the impact of this “great joy” on our hearts.

The Interruption

- Luke 2:8
- If you are a shepherd, this is what you do. You keep watch over your flock at night. You may come across a predator, but that is within the realm of normal also. You may be ready for something “unexpected”, but even that has a limit.
- If you are a king you wake up you put on your crown and you rule. This is the normal daily rhythm.
- The Shepherds vs. The King of Jerusalem: The unexpected expected -
- Even though Christ is expected, the announcement of his birth shows up unexpected in each of these stories. And in each case, there is a different response.
- Genuine respect and fear - read Luke 2:9
- Troubled
- *Matthew 2:1-3 Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him;*
- Everything in our lives is built on a rhythm. Even Christmas has become a yearly rhythm that department stores have helped us create.
- The announcement of Christ is always a rhythm breaker.
- Wherever your life was headed, wherever your focus was... When he comes in, things change. Either, the announcement leaves you in awe and at the beginnings of adoration with great joy, or it threatens your precious rhythm and you compulsively react to protect what you have built at all costs.
- Stop and question vs. Justify and keep moving
- Surrender vs. Keep control
- Pursuit of great joy vs. Pursuit of fading happiness

The Announcement

- Darkness vs. Light
- Luke 2:8-9
- Note the contrast in these verses. It may be subtle, but it is meant to draw the reader into the dramatic shift from darkness to light.
- The Word of God spoken by the angels to the shepherds is radiating in “the glory of the Lord shone around them”
- Luke 2:10-14
- Fear is overwhelmed by Great Joy! - vs. 10
- Vs. 13 - “suddenly” the heavens erupt with Praise and singing to God!
- This is what happens when great joy comes in the announcement with the glory of the Lord shone around them.
- This is not how we see the announcement going over in Matt. 2

- *Matthew 2:2-5* “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, “In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet: “‘And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.’”
- Though the announcement of the Birth of Jesus is sweet from the lips of the Magi, notice that there is no movement from darkness to light.
- They even pursue the Word of God to figure out location of the expected king's birth, but there is no “glory of the Lord” or eruption into worship at the announcement of this baby boy.
- Advent is a celebration of this announcement.
- The heavens erupt in praise to God at the announcement of the coming king. How much more should our hearts be overwhelmed with songs of worship as the message of the Gospel shines on us as the glory of the Lord.
- For some of us, like King Herod, Darkness seems to sustain the strongest call. To the point where it seems there is no light at all. But that is only within your heart. This message of great joy is a call this morning into the light.
- The great struggle is that as you leave here and go to work tomorrow, preparing for the great Christmas party with family and friends... The appearing of the Angel of the Lord does not seem to disrupt your rhythm, when that is the very thing you need the most.

The Pursuit

- Go or Stay
- Luke 2:15-16
- Go:
 - Greater value to be in the presence of Christ than any other responsibility in our daily lives.
 - Those who are consumed with “great joy” this Advent, are most defined by bold and immediate obedience.
- Stay:
 - *Matthew 2:7-8* Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, “Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.”
 - Herod, nor the priests and scribes, seemed very interested to go see the savior who was born.
- Anyone who experiences this interruption and experiences the light of the Gospel shown upon them will find it extremely difficult to stay. Anyone who remains consumed in their darkness and hears the Gospel, even acknowledging it is true, will find it extremely difficult to go.

The Return

- Luke 2:20
- The shepherds returned.
- The very purpose of the “great joy” filling our hearts is to be brought back to our lives.
- I could walk you through the Biblical theme of this truth... Moses on Mt. Sinai; Jesus and Peter at the mt. of transfiguration; The disciples at Pentecost, etc...
- May it suffice to say that we are to return transformed in order that others may experience the same.
- How were the Shepherds different? Glorifying and praising God!
- How was Herod changed? He is no longer king.

Your intersection with the Gospel this Advent is meant to be a “great joy” that overwhelms all fear.

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- How does Jesus interrupt our daily lives and changes the trajectory of our future? Where have you experienced the interruption of the coming of Jesus? Describe the experience.
- In what way is there joy in the announcement of the coming of Jesus Christ? What is the relationship between joy and the moving from darkness into the light?
- What are some of the challenges we face in pursuing God? Why do we sometimes withhold from God rather than pursue Him? What things did we have to give up to follow Him?
- How does God use His people, returning to their lives, to proclaim the Gospel in the surrounding world?
- Why can we have joy with the coming of Jesus Christ into the world? What effect has Christ had by His presence in the world?

Challenge For The Week

The Advent of Jesus Christ came with an announcement of great joy to all the world. Everyone who hears the word of God and receives its impact finds the Gospel that Jesus Christ has come into this world to rescue His people from sin and death.

- This week, take some time in prayer to thank the Lord for all the ways that He has saved and redeemed your life. Consider where you were before Christ and the impact of joy that God worked within you.
- This week, take some time and consider who God has placed in your life who needs advent of joy in their life. Pray for them this weekend that God would provide opportunities for you to show them the joy of Jesus Christ.

