

Advent - Joy

Advent is a very special time of the year. It is a time of celebration and preparation for the coming of Christ. Advent is simply the Latin word which means coming. Each week we are light a new candle symbolizing the Light that has come into the world on Christmas Day, Jesus' Birthday.

In the past two weeks, we have lit a candle for faith and a candle for peace. Today, we have lit those candles again and then lit the pink Joy candle as we talk about Jesus being more than a baby. He has brought joy into the world.

If you are a parent and have had the wonderful opportunity of holding your baby for the first time then you know what true joy feels like. It is an emotion that overwhelms the soul and leaves you speechless.

The prophet Isaiah spoke of joy in Isaiah 12. Let's read this passage.

Isaiah 12:1-6

(1) In that day you will say: "I will praise you, LORD. Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me. (2) Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation." (3) With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. (4) In that day you will say: "Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done, and proclaim that his name is exalted. (5) Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things; let this be known to all the world. (6) Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

Joy is more about well-being than happiness. It is a heart of gladness and delight. We can experience joy even when things are not going the way we want them to.

Take for instance the circumstances surrounding the birth of Jesus:

Mary and Joseph were on their way to register in a census. They were traveling by donkey at 9 months pregnant!

When Mary went into labor all the hotel rooms were full. They had to settle in a barn!

The Savior was born and joy abounded.

Luke 2:9-11

(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.



Despite their circumstances, Jesus was born. Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the wise men, and so many other people were filled with joy as a result of his birth. Jesus brings joy. He is good news.

The angel said that the news of Jesus being born “will cause great joy for all the people.” The long awaited Messiah had finally made an appearance. He had finally arrived.

God told us of the joy that the Messiah would bring hundreds of years before in Isaiah 35. Let’s read it together.

Isaiah 35:1-10

(1) The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, (2) it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God. (3) Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; (4) say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." (5) Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. (6) Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. (7) The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow. (8) And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. (9) No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, (10) and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

God promised that delight would come to Jerusalem and people would experience joy. Jesus brings joy. Jesus is that joy.

We can experience the joy of Jesus when we realize that through him our sins are forgiven, and we can have eternal life. To know Jesus and to be truly known by him brings joy as we experience his peace, his hope, and his love. Each one of us can experience the joy of Christ this Christmas and for our entire lives. Jesus was more than a baby, he became the Savior of the world who has brought peace, faith, and joy to mankind.

As you go about your preparations for Christmas may you be mindful of the true meaning of Christmas. May you bring joy to those who are around you who may not be experiencing joy.

