

Recap of 12/19/21 message by Chris Sommerfield – Luke 2:8-16 and selected Scriptures

Waiting for Delivery

The Christmas story brings with it a familiarity that often brings comfort and tradition, but sometimes that familiarity can breed indifference and we can take mistake the birth of Christ as just something common that we celebrate. We can lose the wonder of the incarnation. This season also brings with it pain for some people, stress and anxiety about family and the hustle and bustle of the season.

These things that can steal our joy from us, but there is a way to regain our joy this season:

Remember that Jesus was born into the mess of the world to save us from it.

- The shepherds were “living” in the field with their sheep. It was there, in the midst of life, mess, and monotony that the angels proclaimed the good news of Christ’s birth. The language that was used is so important. Joy in the first century context was so closely related to other concepts, but we have lost some of that today.
- The greek word for “joy” is χαρά (chara), and it is intimately related to the word χάρις (charis) which is the word for “grace.”
- If we add a suffix we get χάρισμα (charisma) the greek word for “gift.” If we add a prefix we get εὐχαριστία (eucharistia) the greek word for “thanksgiving.” This is also the word from where we get our word Eucharist pertaining to the bread and the cup of the Lord’s supper.
- These ideas are intimately connected. Our joy as believers comes from the gift of grace and it garners thanksgiving from saved souls as we remember the sacrifice and salvation found in Jesus Christ.
- Some of the “tracking numbers” the Jewish people used to watch for the delivery of the Messiah, the one who would deliver them, are: Isaiah 7:14, 9:6-7; and Micah 5:2 among many others.
- Things that steal our joy:
 - Sin - Psalm 51: David wrote to “restore the joy of salvation” after he was confronted by Nathan for his sin with Bathsheba
 - Being far from God - Psalm 16: David wrote that in God’s presence there is fullness of joy.
 - Focusing on the circumstances of our life over focusing on God - Philippians: Paul writes of joy and rejoicing throughout the book of Philippians. He does this from a prison cell demonstrating that joy is supernatural and not dependent on circumstances. In Philippians 4:4-7 he exhorts us to rejoice in the Lord and to be anxious for nothing as we go to the Lord in prayer and thanksgiving with our requests. Patterning our lives in this way can lead to a strong relationship with God, peace, and joy.
- The shepherds ran to be in Jesus’ presence after the proclamation of the good news. Are we running to Christ this season? Is our joy being stolen? Let’s reflect on these questions this Christmas season and refocus our minds on the wonder of the birth of Christ.