

I Want Joy

Lesson 02 of the series, "All I Want for Christmas"

I. Jesus' birth is good news meant to bring great joy to people everywhere.

Joy = great delight or happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying; elation

Rejoice = to express great joy

"That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.' Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.' When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, 'Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger." Luke 2:8-16 (NLT)

a. Rejoice! Jesus came to pay the penalty for our sins and restore our relationship with God.

"Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of sin." Romans 4:7-8 (NLT) (see Psalm 32:2)

"So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God." Romans 5:11 (NLT)

b. Rejoice! Jesus came to give us eternal life.

"When the seventy-two disciples returned, they joyfully reported to him, 'Lord, even the demons obey us when we use your name!' 'Yes,' he told them '...But don't rejoice because evil spirits obey you; rejoice because your names are registered in heaven.'" Luke 10:17-21 (NLT)

"There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am." John 14:2-3 (NLT)

"All who seek the LORD will praise him. Their hearts will rejoice with everlasting joy." Psalm 22:26 (NLT)

II. God wants us to always be full of joy.

"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!" Philippians 4:4 (NLT)

"Always be joyful." 1 Thessalonians 5:16 (NLT)

"Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous, and praise his holy name." Psalm 97:12 (NIV)

a. We can always be full of joy if we stay connected to God, the source of joy.

"In Your presence *is* fullness of joy...." Psalm 16:11 (NKJV)

"But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5 (NLT)

b. We can always be full of joy if we remember that Jesus is coming back again soon.

"Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon."
Philippians 4:5 (NLT)

"So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while." 1 Peter 1:6 (NLT)

"Yes, I am coming soon! Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" Revelation 22:20 (NLT)

c. We can always be full of joy if we trust God to handle our problems.

“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7 (NLT)

“The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving.” Psalm 28:7 (NLT)

“Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.”
1 Peter 1:8 (NLT)

- d. We can always be full of joy if we focus on God rather than our problems.

“And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.” Philippians 4:8 (NLT)

“For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.” 2 Corinthians 4:17-18 (NLT)

“Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.” Colossians 3:2 (NIV)

Life Application: To rejoice is a choice!

“This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.” Psalm 118:24 (NLT)

“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12:2 (NIV)

J O H N S C H M I D T • 12-09-18 • john@centeringlives.com

Verses for Further Reflection:

“But let the godly rejoice. Let them be glad in God’s presence. Let them be filled with joy.” Psalm 68:3 (NLT)

“Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!” Nehemiah 8:10 (NLT)

“I will be glad and rejoice in your unfailing love, for you have seen my troubles, and you care about the anguish of my soul.” Psalm 31:7 (NLT)

“I know the LORD is always with me. I will not be shaken, for he is right beside me. No wonder my heart is glad, and I rejoice. My body rests in safety.” Psalm 16:8-9 (NLT)

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Name something that has given you great joy this past year.
2. Read Luke 6:22-23 and Nehemiah 8:10. How is it that we can have joy in the worst of circumstances? Share about a time in your life where you experienced God’s joy in the midst of a hard time.
3. Read John 15:5 and Galatians 5:22-23. What is the secret “formula” for having joy in your life? How are you investing in your relationship with God?
4. Read Philippians 4:4-8. In your opinion, how does our focus impact the joy and peace we have in our lives? Where has your focus been in 2018, and where does it need to be in 2019?
5. Looking at Luke 2:8-16, what are some ways that you can share the Good News of Jesus’ birth with others so that they can also have great joy?