

JOY // An Invitation to Joy

"All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end." - Blaise Pascal

"Every man whatsoever his condition, desires to be happy..." - St. Augustine

THE PERSON OF JOY

Luke 1:39-45, "In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.

"Blessed are you among women, and **blessed** is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for **joy**. And **blessed** was spoken to her from the Lord."

That word blessed is the Greek word "Makarios," which means to be fortunate or literally translated - "happy."

Luke 2:8-11, "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.'"

One of the primary themes, not only around the Christmas story, but throughout the entire Life of Jesus is the theme of JOY. And it's not just a little joy for a few people, but GREAT JOY for ALL PEOPLE.

John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that My **joy** may be in you, and that your **joy** may be full."

Luke 15:7, "I tell you, there will be more **joy** in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. "

Hebrews 1:8-9, "...Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness beyond your companions."

"Jesus Christ is the happiest being in the universe. His gladness is greater than all the angelic gladness of heaven. He mirrors perfectly the infinite, holy, indomitable mirth of His Father"
 - John Piper, *Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ*

THE PRIMACY OF JOY

Romans 5:2, "...we rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Romans 5:3, "Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings..."

Romans 5:11, "More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

"The major mark of justified believers is joy, especially joy in God himself. We should be the most positive people in the world. For the new community of Jesus Christ is characterized not by a self-centered triumphalism but by a God-centered worship."

- John Stott

2 Corinthians 4:7-10, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed..."

One of the marks of an emotionally mature person is the ability to hold sorrow and joy together at the same time.

1 Thessalonians 4:13, "...that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope."

Psalms 4:7, "You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound."

Nehemiah 8:10, "for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

THE PURSUIT OF JOY

John 10:10, "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

John 16:20-22, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you."