12/8/24 am

Advent 2024

“Good News of Great Joy”

Luke 2:10-11

Isaiah 9:1-7

Much joy is found in the Christmas season…

Decorations, family, friends, food, parties, Christmas music, school break, presents, etc.

The joy experienced in this season is often not the joy that the angel spoke of. How do I know? Because in January, it’s gone.

None of that is lasting. People spend their lives grasping for things that will bring joy. Looking forward to a temporary satisfaction and contentedness. A dopamine fix. We can find things that temporarily bring joy – that emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires…though we usually call that happiness…and we find that it is fully dependent on our circumstances.

* Joy definition

***Joy definition***: gladness; the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires: delight

***Joy antonyms***: sadness, sorrow, anguish, misery, despair, gloom

***Rejoice***: the expression of joy

* Joy sought: craved and grasped for
  + Counterfeits/temporary gladness
    - *Not from a possession, not from an experience, not from a human relationship*
    - *(Temporary gladness vs permanent, underlying gladness. Gladness as a season vs gladness as a state)*
* Joy a reality: Good news of great joy
  + Isaiah 9:1-7
    - Those who walked in darkness, gloom, anguish
      * Israel…and us
    - Have seen a great light, You have increased this people’s joy!
      * Pointed directly to the coming of Jesus, the awaited Savior; brought gladness where there was only gloom
        + Like having a weight lifted. Getting great news among all the bad. Having a debt erased
    - The significance of this news:
      * God with us
      * Breaking the bonds of oppression
        + Current/future
    - They rejoice before you as at the harvest, as when they divide the spoil
      * The harvest and gathering in spoil of war are those good things that bring momentary gladness
      * “*before you*” has a sense of not simply thanking Him for something, but rejoicing *with Him as the focus*. Taking joy in Him. He is the reason for the gladness
        + This is why we speak of biblical joy as lasting. Because He is the object of it, and He does not change.
  + Gal 5:22-23
* Joy no matter what: even in the midst of trouble
  + - The struggles pale in comparison to the good news of great joy in which we live
      * \*Illustration
  + John 16:22, Habakkuk 3:17-19
  + James 1
    - The hard things aren’t just worthless pain, they actually get used to
  + Why such a struggle sometimes, for us who are the recipients of the choicest bounties of Heaven?
    - “Turn your eyes upon Jesus”

Joy isn’t something we need to try harder to achieve. This underlying gladness marks the life of one who has been saved and keeps their eyes fixed on Him