

## Joy to the World

Christmas is what we celebrate, Not happy holiday, festivity, winter celebration or Xmas. Jesus is the reason for the season. When people are bold enough to remove our saviour from his birthday we need to be bold enough to respond with a resounding Merry Christmas!

The world says that it does not need Jesus. Ever notice how every faith is defended in the public except Christianity. Sikh kids can carry 8" knives and wear turbans to school but Christian kids can't carry a bible or wear a cross. Other faiths are not challenged because they are not a threat to the enemy's dominion... Jesus is. The enemy is defeated; he just doesn't see it yet.

When Jesus came into the world; a lot of unlikely things took place:

God chose a Virgin to become Pregnant

God gave to Joseph an Angel to Joseph so that he would not think lowly of Mary

God sent a baby to reveal to us the revelation of himself through his word.

Jesus was wrapped in his father's death rags as swaddling clothes.

God did not prepare a royal welcome for his son among men

God did not plow the road for a hotel room to be available for his son

God did not provide a feather bed for his son, but a feeding trough

God placed a star (Light) in the East so that the wise men would be lead to Jesus

God did not stop Herod who believed he was the messiah from trying to kill the baby

Yet, we want God to solve all of our problems and plow the road for everything in our life

The bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 12:9:

*"...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."*

In every aspect of our lives, Jesus has provided the example for us. Did you get that... In every aspect of our lives, God's grace is sufficient for us?

What does the Word of God say about this humble little baby named Jesus who was born to Mary and Joseph?

"He will be great and will be called the son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Luke 1:32

“You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” Matthew 1:21

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only son of the Father, full of grace and truth” John 1:14

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” Isaiah 9:6”

“Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”  
Matthew 28:18

C. S. Lewis once said: “The central miracle asserted by Christians is the incarnation. They say that God became Man. Every other miracle prepares the way for this, or results from this.”

I agree with Clive, this is where we need to focus attention, sometimes we focus our attention on the peripheral questions like How did Jesus change the water in to wine or was the wine really wine or grape juice, while these things are fun to explore let's not get distracted from the central truth that we believe that the almighty God of the universe became man. The creator became a part of his creation. God humbled himself, became man and came as a baby.

John 3:16 tells us that:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Why would God do this? Why would God become a man? Why would the eternal God ever come down from heaven to one little blue speck in a gigantic universe and become a humble baby?

- **He came that he might lead many of us to glory**

“For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of heir salvation perfect through suffering.” Hebrews 2:10

Jesus has provided us with a template for different kind of perfection or completion in our lives. We learn through the experiences we have. In our lives we experience Joys and suffer hurts. Jesus was fully God and fully man. He came as a babe to give us hope and Joy. He was tempted and he entered into suffering. In everything he endured emerged victorious in every situation.

Now if Christ was to die for us why did he have a ministry on earth? Why didn't he just die when Herod sought to destroy him?

The simple answer is that Christ's ministry provides us with an example for us to learn from. Jesus was, is and ever shall be the Rhema Logos or living Word. Jesus gave us the example of how to live in relationship with God. The sacrifice of his blood provided the atonement for us and gave us great worth. The good news of Jesus Christ is that we are back in right standing with God the father. We can stand before the throne as sons and daughters, in fact a royal priesthood in confidence because of the blood of Christ.

Here is more good news... God puts us through lessons in grace through the school of suffering...

Uh... What?

School starts the moment we believe in Christ. But we can always choose to take the easy road or we can choose the royal road. Every choice we make is either a choice of fear or a choice of faith. Jesus never failed a test, he was sinless and above reproach. As I said, he is our example: When we read his Word, pray and learn, all of the fundamental lessons that we need to learn are in his example. If we don't read and pray, how do we know what the right choices are? Do we rely on our own experiences and continue in habits and practices, long established that cause us to continue to suffer... or do we pray for Jesus to help us with the strength to change. Once we realize that Christ is also our strength, we have hope and peace, because we are not trying to be righteous in ourselves or in fact be our own saviours.

The Holy Spirit is working to bring about the likeness of Christ within us. His work was to draw us to Christ. Why would he do that? He is bringing us to glory. Joy to Us! Joy to our community! Joy to the world!

The world tells us the definition of insanity is to keep doing the same things and expecting different results. God doesn't interfere with our choices. We can choose to keep going around and around until we realize that we may have to change a perspective or make other choices. When we know what God wants us to do and we walk in his will, we will have peace and blessing in our lives.

We pray for blessings and peace. We pray for healing prosperity and for his mighty hand to ease our suffering. What if the trials of this life are your mercies in disguise? But what if it takes 1000 sleepless nights to recognize God is near?

It's worth it! I went through 1000 sleepless nights and I wouldn't trade one of them if it would take away from my recognition of God in my life. We need to recognize that the promises of God's word are enough. His grace is sufficient for us. Healing sometimes comes in tears. My heart wasn't right with God. Psalms 30:5 tells us that your anger lasts a little while but your kindness lasts for a lifetime. At night we may cry but when morning comes we will celebrate. God brings an end to sorrow and suffering. He restores hearts and brings life and life more abundantly. So I say Joy to Me! And truly Joy to the world!, because without Christ we would have no hope of at-one-ment with God, we would have no hope of eternal life and we would have no hope of righteousness. See a pattern here? Without Christ there is no hope... But, he loved us enough to come, to humble himself, to give us hope.

Does it cost us something? Yes, it can cost us everything, but in losing everything we gain everything. Jesus wants to give us resurrection power, the ability to cast out demons in his name, the authority to heal the sick and the lame. Jesus wants to impart on his church the best gifts.

Is this good news? Yes! I say Merry Christmas: Joy to the World! Joy to us!

- **He came that he might be one of us**

“For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, ‘I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.’ And again, ‘I will put my trust in him.’ And again, ‘Behold, I and the children God has given me’” (vv. 11-13).

Jesus is proud of us his children, he loves us; his grace is endless. We live under an open heaven, with all the blessings of God within our reach. Christ came for us to save us. To provide the example of how we should live. He did not keep separation from us but lived the whole human experience. Jesus was sinless, but he took on our sin. Jesus was broken, reviled and crucified. Jesus has suffered and none of us can ever say that our Lord and Saviour cannot understand the pain, suffering and dis-function of humanity. Jesus wept when he went to see Lazarus family, not because he didn't think he could raise him. Jesus wept because our saviour does not distance himself from our suffering. I say Joy to the world! That is a God that I can believe in! That is a God that I can serve. He knows today how everyone feels, he knows every hurt, he knows every sorrow; he knows every joy. This is the God of our hearts; he is our God who desires a personal intimate relationship with each of us.

If you are suffering today, Jesus has not forgotten you, you are not alone. He is here. He loves you, delights over you, sings over you and is there to restore you when you fall. He is there to love you through bad choices and rejoice with you over good ones. You could never have a better friend. He delights when his church reflects his character in our love and care for one another.

- **He Came to Free Us From the Bondage of Death.**

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery” (vv. 14-15).

Through the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus we are free from Death. What more can I say except Joy to the World, Joy to us.

- **He Came to Free Us From Sin.**

verse 17. “Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people”

We are Free! We are Free! We are Free! Praise Jesus we are Free!

Jesus has paid the propitiatory sacrifice to put us in right standing with God the Father. He has redeemed us. We are bought and paid for with his blood. We have a Christ-like nature growing inside of us. Instead of being trapped in an Adamic nature we have freedom. We have been given the greatest gift of all the freedom to choose to serve him. The word tells us in 1 Sam 15:22 that obedience is better than sacrifice. It is up to us to make the choices. God has made us valuable, we have great worth. We are his pearl of great price. He gave everything he had to purchase us.

We can choose to live in fear or in faith. I like what it says in Joshua 24:15, As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!

All it takes is a choice and a commitment to follow him. I wasn't strong enough and he became my strength. I couldn't handle it, and he propped me up. His tells me that his burden is easy, his yolk is light. I can be what he wants me to be not because of myself but because of him.

I have never been happier, more fulfilled and more complete. When I gave myself 100% to God, he gave himself 100% to me! I don't want to live a life of 30% or 60%, but I want to wholly life a life that honors God. I want to walk the path of one who will give their all to Jesus.

Who will come with me and walk with him? Truly following the path of the one we celebrate at Christmas is the path that brings Joy to the World!