

Do You See

JOY

The Greatest Joy

READ: LUKE 2:8-14

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about being joyful, there can be a temptation to make it exclusively about happiness. While happiness can be something that contains joy, a person can be joyful without being happy. (1 Peter 1:6-8) In Scripture God emphasizes the importance of joy in our lives because He has given us a great gift to be joyful about; Jesus. This gift was not earned and it was not something that people sought after because mankind is often focused more on temporary happiness that provides a dopamine hit rather than choosing joy in all circumstances. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

The gift of Jesus Christ to mankind was one that would help us to experience God in a personal manner through His death on the cross but also, we can see Him as One who shows us the path to being joyful in every circumstance. It is because of His sacrifice that we know we are saved and it is His continually looking to the Father that we can be assured that we can face every trial with joy. He didn't have to come in the form of a man but He did. So, that means that we can be joyful. God gave us the ultimate gift and that should cause us to be joyful.

In any trial or circumstance we can look to the gift that God gave us and have confidence that His love for us is bigger. His gift causes us to focus our eyes on Him and because it is so big and so unearned we can look past those hurts and pains and experience something that is greater than a dopamine hit. Jesus gives us the ultimate joy and the angels expressed that joy when they said, "Glory to God in the Highest!" to the shepherds in that field. We are to not be afraid but to hold on to the joy that Jesus brings and continue pursuing a life that is not only reflective of Him but brings honor and glory to His name.

ADVENT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read 1 Peter 1:6-8. What does this passage say about joy versus happiness? How can we experience the joy that Christ has to offer? How do we share that joy with others?
2. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. What does it look like to choose joy? How are joy and happiness different? How are they the same?
3. Can you think of a time when you were joyful in spite of your circumstance? What was complicated about it? How did God help in that time?
4. Why should we be joyful about Christ's coming? What was the great joy that the angels were talking about to the shepherds?
5. What things in life take our eyes off of the joy that Jesus gives? How can we recalibrate our minds to focus on Him rather than the distractions?

WRAP UP

Christ's joy was to bless us with salvation. That was only possible through His amazing sacrifice. He had to come to earth as a baby and that coming was the beginning of something that would allow for all people of every nation to experience the joy of the Lord. This is not a temporary happiness but an eternal joy that outshines any darkness. Glory to God in the Highest!