

Text

Luke 2:10-11

Main Point

The Occasion of Joy

Hook – Occasion of Joy

Christmas is an occasion of great joy.

We have just sung “Joy to the Lord” and “Hark the Herald Angel Sing” both songs proclaiming the great joy we remember at Christmas.

That joy is expressed as we

- take time off work,
- spend time with family,
- decorate the house in a special way,
- eat way too much food and
- give presents to one another.

What great ways to express this joy.

We do all these things to express our joy because there is so much to rejoice about.

Luke 2:10-11 Context and Passage

Did you notice, too, in one of the passages we read that even the angels proclaim that there is much to rejoice about?

I want to draw your attention to a couple of verses in the second chapter of Luke.

It is part of the passage where the shepherds are going through the ordinary grid of everyday life.

There they are doing their work, tending their sheep, and then something extraordinary happens.

An angel appears to them.

If you have a bible open to the second chapter of Luke, look at verses 10 and 11.

Verse 10 says

*¹⁰ 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.*

So even the angle sets the tone. There is good news that will cause great joy for all people. There is much to rejoice about.

And what is the cause of this great joy? What is this good news?

Verse 11 tells us what is the cause of this great joy:

¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Who needs a saviour?

There is the object of the joy of Christmas: A saviour has been born.

Do you think this is a worthy reason to rejoice?

To be fair, that will depend on whether you think you need a saviour or not.

In fact, if you don't think you need a saviour, this statement the angel makes is not good news at all. It is actually insulting and offensive.

A saviour implies:

- you need some sort of saving,
- that you need some sort of help, or
- that there is some sort of deficiency in you.

Illustration of the lifeguard

It is like if you were happily swimming at the beach. You are doing your laps and are feeling strong.

But then an overzealous coastguard races over to you, throws you a life buoy (narrowly misses your head) and tries to save you. That would be annoying, insulting and offensive.

- You were not drowning.
- You did not need saving.
- The lifeguard was a nuisance and annoying.
- You are fine without him.

You have no reason to rejoice on account of this lifeguard and every reason to be angry at him.

If you don't think you need a saviour, there is no reason to rejoice at the birth of Jesus Christ.

You are a sinner in need of a saviour

But the thing is, we all need a saviour. We all need to be saved from our sins.

When I say "sins" it can be helpful to think of it as crimes against God.

Sin is breaking the law that God has given us. And those who break his law are criminals.

Those who break the law of New Zealand are criminals in New Zealand.

Those who break God's laws are criminals before God.

Criminal Before God

Do you think you are a criminal before God?

- Have you ever told a lie?
- Have you ever stolen something?
- Have you ever used God's name as a cuss word?
- Have you always obeyed your father and mother?

Any one of those actions, and others, makes you a criminal before God.

But God also sees our thoughts and holds us accountable at the level of our thoughts.

- The Lord Jesus said that if you are **angry** against someone, or you hate them, you carry the same condemnation as a murderer.
- Jesus Christ also said that if you look with **lust** at someone, you carry the same condemnation as if you had committed the act of adultery.

One single angry or lustful thought makes you a criminal before God. How many of those thoughts have you had in your lifetime?

God will hold you accountable for your every thought and your every action.

And so "YES", every single one of us is a criminal before God because of our thoughts and actions.

God is a just judge

And the Bible tells us God is a just judge. He is not corrupt. He does not fail to punish the evildoers. And this should make us glad until we realise that we too are amongst the evil doers.

We have broken God's law in our thoughts and actions.

Since God is just, he will punish criminals. The bible describes that punishment as Hell. A place of eternal torment. A place where criminals rightly pay for their crimes against God.

Jesus only Saviour

So, do you see your need for a saviour?

Do you see why there is such reason to rejoice as we remember the birth of Jesus the messiah?

Without Jesus Christ, there is no way to be saved from Hell.

The work of Jesus Christ is the only way to save you from the punishment you deserve, the only way to save you from Hell.

Great exchange

You see, Jesus Christ was born for a very specific purpose.

He was born for the purpose of dying on a Cross.

And when he died on the cross, he was paying the punishment that your crimes deserved.

Your crimes against God had earned you a debt, when Jesus died on that cross he was paying that debt in your place.

He is our saviour.

That is how he saves us.

Not fair, Grace

Now you may say “That is not fair” “Jesus Christ paying the debt I owe is not fair”. And that is totally

right. It's not fair. If you received what is fair you would spend eternity in Hell.

But God is not only just, he is also merciful and gracious.

That is why he sent His son to be born and to Die on the cross to pay for your sins so that you do not need to suffer that punishment.

It is a gracious gift from God.

Accept that Gift

And so you have a choice: To accept or reject that gift.

If you reject that gift, and believe the lie that you don't need a saviour, you will answer to God for all your crimes against him, and He will send you to Hell.

But if you accept the Gift, if you accept that Jesus is your saviour and that he died for your sins, God promises you eternal life in Heaven.

And how do you accept that Gift? The bible tells us we accept that gift by faith. We take God at his word and we trust in his promise.

And that faith is displayed as we seek to live a life that is pleasing to God.

We turn from our sins and turn to things that please God.

We turn from our criminal actions and thoughts, and turn to thoughts and actions that honour Christ.

Will you accept that gift?

Will you see your need for a saviour?

Will you cling to Jesus Christ as your saviour?

Conclusion

Christmas is an occasion of great joy.

It is the occasion of great joy because we remember that our saviour was born.

A saviour who saved us from Hell

A saviour who saved us from Sin

A saviour who paid the penalty we deserved.

A saviour who made a way to Heaven.

A saviour who makes us holy

A saviour who makes us acceptable before God.

The more we realise our need for a saviour, and the more we realise the magnitude of the Work that Jesus Christ, the more we will have reason to rejoice.

Let us pray