



# Grace Fellowship of Morehead, KY

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## Joy to The World More Than a Cliche

*Message preached on Sunday Morning, December 3, 2023*

Much of Christmas has been reduced to clichés. Phrases that were originated to change lives, but due to overuse and repetition end up just being EMPTY and hollow!

One of the most overused phrases actually comes (loosely) from the Bible.

### Luke 2:8-10

- 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.
- 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.
- 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of **great joy, which shall be to all people.**

Joy to all people! **AKA:** Joy to the World!

The most published Christmas hymn in North America! It is on wrapping paper...on Christmas décor... clothing...you name it, you will find that simple saying, "Joy to the World."

Simplifying (through song) this statement made by the angels to the shepherds regarding Jesus...the Passover Lamb!

**BELOVED:** Anyone knows that at the birth of a baby there is joy.

I remember that long day in February where Jessica and I were introduced to Ryne for the first time...joy is an understatement.

Then, about a year later, we got to meet Allyson and that same feeling overwhelmed us. Joy unspeakable! Right?

So there is NO DOUBT that there was going to be joy at the birth of this first-born baby boy...but that is not quite what the angels said.

### **1.) The joy would be to all people!**

The shepherds maybe didn't quite understand that when the angel said ALL PEOPLE that he meant ALL PEOPLE throughout the ages...but that statement did mean it wasn't just joy to the parents...it was the long awaited Messiah!

Think of that time period...a time that they called the "Silent Years" because there were not new prophets born or raised up. Therefore, that caused A LOT of religion...a lot of rules...a lot of frustration among the people.

**UNDERSTAND:** When there is NO VOICE of God to the people...religion begins taking over... which becomes a burden to the people.

**HOWEVER:** At the birth of Jesus...JOY was being introduced back into the world...all would have access to it.

Scriptures tell us that Jesus came to do several specific things...among them are...

- \* To seek and save the lost. Luke 19:10
- \* To destroy the works of the devil. 1 John 3:8
- \* To bring life AND abundance. John 10:10
- \* To give His life as a ransom. Matthew 20:28
- \* To glorify the Father. John 12:27
- \* That the world may be saved (sodzo). John 3:17

When Jesus came...He changed everything! Therefore, joy to the world!

## 2.) Not just joy...but GREAT JOY!

Here is the thing I like to point out when we deal with this verse. We are so used to saying "Joy to the world" that we miss what actually came to earth.

**"Great"** – *megas* – MEGA! Very large, exceedingly large, abundant, intensity, violent. Raging...out of control...joy...to a world that needed it.

This joy isn't just a little happiness that is fleeting. It is a MASSIVE JOY, that if you allow it to, will take over!

**SECOND DEFINITION** of that Greek Word which would be where we get the word and rank MAJOR in our vocabulary means...authority, power, highly esteemed.

**BELOVED:** When it comes to THIS JOY...it supersedes all natural senses. It has the authority and power to TAKE OVER in any situation!

**AGAIN:** This isn't just mere happiness or silliness that heads for the hills in the face of adversity. When troubles rise...that is when a MAJOR gets to action!

## It is our Strength!

Nehemiah 8:10 – "Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

**UNDERSTAND:** The children of Israel had been in exile for around 70 years. They were finally allowed to return to Jerusalem where they rebuilt the temple (Ezra) and then began working on rebuilding the walls (Nehemiah).

At the completion of the walls...Ezra sat them down and began reading them the law...what they should be doing...what they actually were not doing!

Vs. 9 – The people began to weep because of what they had failed to do to their God. Not just a few tears...but weeping bitterly over their failures.

**INSERT NOTE:** Ain't we all been there! Whether it be over what we've done wrong...or what we find ourselves in the middle of in life.

In verse 10 they are given a couple direct instructions that are essential when you find yourself in the middle of grief, sorrow or sadness.

### 1.) Go party!

Or as the church says, "fellowship". Don't get in your closet...get on the dance floor! Eat...eat good...that is what the FAT means!

### 2.) Give!

Sending portions to those who don't have anything prepared. You would be surprised what giving will do to your mental health.

### 3.) Step into JOY!

The joy of the Lord is your strength.

**UNDERSTAND:** The joy of the Lord isn't some slap-stick comedy routine or silliness (though it can be)...it is a DELIGHT...and inward KNOWING that overflows onto your face!

I have heard it said that JOY is the only fruit of the spirit that doesn't really have an outward show.

*I say "bah-humbug"!*

Proverbs 15:13 – "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."

You will know where the JOY of the Lord is happening...by the overflow of the face!

## Joy is a Force!

The problem is...we often see JOY as an inconvenience. We feel sad...we are full of grief...we don't feel like JOY.

Psalm 30:5 – "For his anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

**"Weeping"** – dripping tears, overwhelming

There is a time for sadness and weeping...not necessarily wrong, BUT it won't get you to where you are going! That is the important thing to understand!

There is a light of the revelation of the Word of God...insight into Who He is, His power, His goodness, His character...that will bring you JOY!

When JOY comes...things change! Mega joy!

Psalm 30:11,12

11 Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness;

12 To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

James 1:2-8 (to the twelve tribes scattered due to persecution)

### 2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

**"Count"** – to rule over, to command

What are we in command of...it all!

**OFTEN** we ask God to step in and change things...but the truth is...we are in control/command of our situation.

**"Divers temptations"** – different types of temptations, tests and trials!

**YOU MAY SAY:** "But my situation is different."

**ANSWER:** Good! It is divers! Therefore, you are still in command!

I do want you to **NOTICE** that the FOUNDATIONAL command given to us is to COMMAND our JOY!

If we command our joy...we will see the end...if we don't we will sit down in the middle of it and lost heart!

### 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

**YOU BETTER KNOW THIS:** When you are confronted with temptations, tests and trials...your patience is put to work.

The world defines patience as a passive toleration of things we don't like.

**"Patience"** – independent, unyielding, defiant perseverance in the face of aggressive misfortune and thus to a kind of courageousness (Joshua 1:6,7,9).

**BELOVED:** You don't operate in patience (constancy) without JOY...you can't! It is impossible!  
 You will roll over and give up! You won't have the strength to stand!  
 You cannot sit and weep and wait...you must get into JOY and have the strength to stand.  
**YOU MAY SAY:** That sounds horrible!

**4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.**

**UNDERSTAND:** At the end of patience...it isn't so horrible after all!

**PERFECT AND ENTIRE, LACKING NOTHING!**

**BELOVED:** If you miss this MEGA JOY that has come to earth...if you let it go...something that is available to all...you WILL MISS what Jesus provided for you on the cross!  
 And to me...there is nothing more heart-breaking than that!

- 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.  
 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.  
 7 **For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.**  
 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

## The Children of Israel

425 years they were in bondage. They prospered...absolutely...however...

Exodus 2:23-25

- 23 And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage.  
 24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.  
 25 And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.

When you are in bondage...things will continually get worse and worse...unless you change things!

**REMEMBER** what God Moses in trouble when killing that man?

Exodus 2:11 – "...he looked on their burdens..."

God began a process of getting them out. Ten plagues! Nine times nothing really changed...the tenth time they tapped into the blood of the Lamb.

But something else changed after the tenth time.

Psalm 105:37,38,43

- 37 **He brought them forth** also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.  
**HOW 'BOUT THIS:** The greatest night of healing that has ever been on the face of the earth.  
 38 Egypt was glad when they departed: for the fear of them fell upon them.

**HERE IS THE KEY to this manifestation after years of burdens!**

43 **And he brought forth** his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness:

(NLT) – "So he brought his people out of Egypt with joy, his chosen ones with rejoicing."

**UNDERSTAND:** The healing didn't come and then JOY. Deliverance didn't come and then JOY. Joy came and then healing came! The removal of years of burdens and heaviness came.

Proverbs 17:22 – "A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength."

**NOTICE:** They had been withering for years...but JOY came and changed it all.

### Conclusion

I will NOT tell you that you CAN'T CRY! You have been given emotions from God, so that would be wrong to say.

**HOWEVER:** You cannot live in tears! It may feel good to have a good cry, but it is not taking you out of your burden or bondage/temptations, tests and trials. ***It just isn't!***

Too many Christians are stuck...waiting for break-through...waiting for God to do something, when God has already given you the victory and given you the way out by MEGA JOY! ***Commanding JOY!*** You gotta step into that JOY to get to the point of lacking nothing!