**Advent: An Invitation to Joy**

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And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:8-11)

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# Introduction

Nowadays, we are often caught up with many bad news around us (like politics, education, economy), that sometimes we wonder if there is any good news at all. And thank God there is! We hear good news in the form of a good salary raise, wonderful bonus, commendation, promotion, blessings all around, and even when someone declares that they are cancer-free! These good news remind us of God’s goodness. But the greatest and best news of all, was the news that the angels came to announce 2000 years ago. It is the news of great joy; the birth of our saviour, Jesus!

# A Saviour has been born to us (He is the Saviour)

The greatest news of joy is when the angels announced that a saviour has been born to us. The angels said to Joseph and Mary, to give him the name Jesus (*“Yeshua”* in Hebrew), which means “saviour”, for he has come to save his people from their sins.

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21)

What did Jesus come to do? Jesus came to die for our sins. Jesus is our saviour for he sets us free and delivers us. While we are under bondage of sin and burden, Jesus came to die for us to break that bondage and to give us hope and a future. Jesus delivered us from sin and shame, so we can walk tall before God.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:8)

Jesus does more than just delivering us from our sins. He also gives us breakthroughs in our lives and fills us with joy. At times when we are bitter, disappointed, and angry or feeling betrayed, breakthroughs can happen when we open up and let Jesus come into our lives. With Jesus our saviour, he brings deliverance, healing, and joy into people’s lives.

In this season, we must reach out to share the joy of Jesus Christ with others. We have the greatest news to share with the world, of our saviour Jesus Christ. The birth of our saviour is God’s demonstration of love for us all. Jesus is God’s gift to the world for God wants many people to be saved.

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. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. (John 3:16-17)

# He is Christ the Messiah

Jesus is Christ the Messiah. Messiah comes from the Hebrew word *“Mashiach”* (“the anointed one”). This means that Jesus is the anointed one, set apart by God to fulfil the prophecies in the scriptures.

he is the Messiah, the Lord.  (Luke 2: 11b)

The prophet Isaiah has prophesized the birth of Jesus since 700 years ago before the actual birth of Jesus. A virgin will be with child and this child will be called Emmanuel (God with us). With the birth of Jesus, God has come to be with us, dwelling among us so that we can encounter God. God being with us reaffirms us that God is with us through our journey with Him and that for us to know that He is real.

Therefore the Lord himself will give youa sign:The virginwill conceive and give birth to a son,andwill call him Emmanuel (Isaiah 7:14)

Jesus is also the fulfilment of the prophecy of who God is. He is the Truth and the Peace. Man has constantly searched for the meaning of Truth and Peace. But we fail to understand that Truth and Peace are a person. Truth is not a doctrine but a person. And Peace is not the absence of conflict or war, but a person too. And this person is Jesus! Jesus offers us truth and peace, and when we know Jesus, we will have both truth and peace.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)

Jesus is the only way for us to know God. Accept Jesus as our personal saviour for through Jesus then will we know God. In this season, share the joy of Jesus with others so that many will know the truth and find peace.

Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”.  (John 14:6)

# He is the Lord

# Jesus comes as the Lord. For he is the Lord.

he is the Messiah, the Lord.  (Luke 2: 11b)

# Though Jesus may be born as a baby, led a human life and dwell among us as man and servant; He is our savior and Lord. Knowing him will give us peace and joy, for he offers us hope and help. In this season, we should share the peace and joy and bring that into people’s lives.

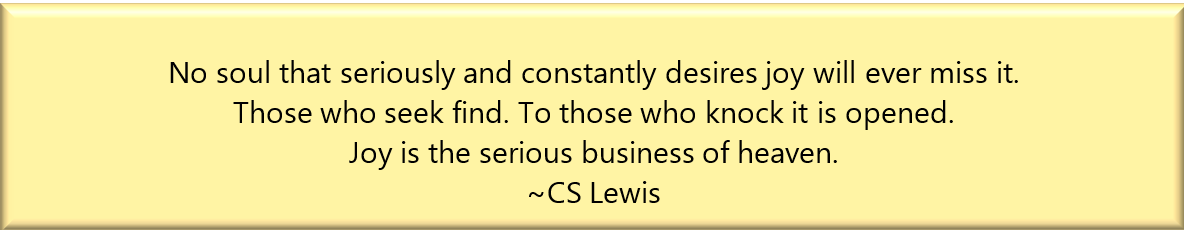
And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:8-11)

Jesus is Christ the Lord. He offers hope and help to everyone. At times when we may go through difficult times, turn to God. His grace shall release joy to us all. God will turn our weeping and sorrow into joy, and our hearts will be filled with joy. In this season, we share the joy with others so that they can encounter God to know what a wonderful God he is.

Those who sow with tears, will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them. (Psalm 126:5-6)

Conclusion

******Jesus, our saviour, messiah and Lord; is the greatest joy in our lives. He came to deliver us from sin, fulfil the prophecies and to offer hope and help to all those who call on him. What hope, love, and joy we find in our saviour! In this season of advent, the invitation to joy is extended to all!

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Sermon summary by Adeline Ting.