

December 22, 2019



“Christmas Presence: Giving Presence All Year”

“Christmas Presence in Your World: A Gift of Joy”

“but the angel reassured them. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!’” Luke 2:10-11

A. Christmas is a time of joy...

“Christmas is a delightful disruption of the way things normally go.” – Dean Willimon

1. It was predicted 740 years earlier that a Messiah would come from Bethlehem!

“But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on My behalf.” Micah 5:2

2. And even earlier, it was predicted that He would bring great joy!

“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light.

For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine. You will enlarge the nation of Israel, and its people will rejoice. They will rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest... For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on His shoulders. And He will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of His ancestor David for all eternity.” Isaiah 9:2,3a,6,7a

3. There was great joy when the shepherds were told of the birth of Christ.

“but the angel reassured them. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.’” Luke 2:10

4. There was great joy when the Magi found the Christ!

“When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!” Matthew 2:10

B. A gift of joy...

“There I will go to the altar of God, to God—the source of all my joy. I will praise you with my harp, O God, my God!” Psalm 43:4

1. God’s gift to us should bring us joy!

“I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!” John 15:11

2. The gift of joy should be lasting!

“So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.” John 16:22

3. Our worship should be full of joy!

“They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity...” Acts 2:46

4. God has cleared our record of sin, and that should bring joy!

“Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of sin.” Romans 4:7-8 (Psalm 32:1-2)

5. Our lives should reflect that joy!

“For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” Romans 14:7

6. A natural part of the Holy Spirit’s work in us should be joy!

“But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,” Galatians 5:22

7. Choosing joy should be a daily act of our will!

“Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!”

Philippians 4:4

“Always be joyful.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16

8. Don’t let people or circumstances rob your joy!

“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy.” James 1:2

9. Even though faith is not seen, it should bring us joy!

“You love Him even though you have never seen Him. Though you do not see Him now, you trust Him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy.” 1 Peter 1:8

10. Because God can keep us, it should bring us joy!

“Now all glory to God, who is able to keep you from falling away and will bring you with great joy into His glorious presence without a single fault.” Jude 24

C. Have joy...bring joy...give joy...

1. You can’t bring or give what you don’t have! Jesus came that we would have joy! Nehemiah speaks to the people in this passage. Judaism was meant to be a religion of gladness...but the joy had been lost. With lifeless faith, they could not conquer the difficulties of their time! So...he challenged them to be thankful and glad...to have a God-fixed joy!

Have joy...

“...This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!” Nehemiah 8:10

2. Bring joy to those in your world!

- Smile at people you see
- Sing or hum throughout your day
- Spend time with them
- Bake them something
- Send a card or a note
- Compliment them
- Give them a small gift
- Be their encourager
- Be flexible and give grace

Bring joy...

“Make sure you don’t take things for granted and go slack in working for the common good; share what you have with others. God takes particular pleasure in acts of worship—a different kind of ‘sacrifice’—that take place in kitchen and workplace and on the streets.” Hebrews 13:16 The Message

3. Give joy to those around you... *“The joy of giving lasts longer than the joy of getting!”*

- Share something with others
- Give a hug
- Give a listening ear
- Give a gift that costs you...time, resources, etc.
- Look for those opportunities to give

Give joy...

“Tell those rich in this world’s wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God, who piles on all the riches we could ever manage—to do good, to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they’ll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.” 1 Timothy 6:18-19

*December 29: Christmas Presence in Your Future:
A Gift of Hope*