



## THE GIFTS OF Christmas

### SERMON NOTES—PASTOR THOMAS A. KEYS

#### The Gift Of Joy: “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy...”

Scriptures: Ps. 96:11–13; Luke 2:13–14 1; Matt. 2:10–11, James 1:2–3 I Thess. 5:16–18, John 15:9 – 11

## INTRODUCTION

“Hakuna Matata.” Swahili phrase made famous in the 1994 movie The Lion King sometimes seems to be the way we approach joy, especially this time of year. The phrase means “no worries.” where Timba and Pumbaa, try to convince the young lion, Simba, to forget about his troubles and just live for the moment. But “no worries” is not what the angels proclaimed that first Christmas. Instead, they proclaimed good news of great joy for all people. Joy to the world, the Lord is come! The Joy of Christmas is not about the gifts and the celebrations, but about the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the blessed Savior of the world.

## SERMON POINTS

Today on this third Sunday of Advent we are looking at the **Gift of Joy**. I know that most of us have heard that there is a difference between Joy and happiness. Happiness makes up happy based on what is happening to you or around you. But Joy, is something that is foundational, eternal and internal that gives you strength and even happiness, no matter what is going on in your life. The Joy of the Lord – found in our relationship, salvation in Jesus Christ, is our strength (Neh. 8:10)

So what I want to do in this message, as we look at the Gift of Joy is for us to the Word in OT and NT so that we can discover how we can **Anticipate**, **Appreciate**, and **Appropriate** the Joy that Christ brings not just at Christmastime but all throughout the year.

### I. Anticipate Joy (Ps. 96:11 – 13, Luke 2:10-11)

- ♦ **Anticipate an Engagement of Joy** - . The Psalmist declares that the trees, the earth, seas and everything around us is called to rejoice in the coming of the Lord. What I mean here is that all creation rejoices in anticipation of the Coming of the Lord. In other words, as we fix our minds on the Jesus and His coming – we join with all creation and share in and receive a joy that far exceeds our problems. That having a mind to worship brings us Joy.

- ♦ **Anticipate the Announcement of Joy** – The Psalmist goes on to give the reason for the Joy – because of the announcement that the Lord is coming to set things right to Judge the world and bless his people – bring His truth and His promises of salvation to pass. In other words, just like the little kids have joy looking for Santa to come, we greater joy in Jesus Christ
- ♦ **Anticipate the Fulfilment of Joy** – As we turn to the NT – we see the announcement of the fulfillment of Psalm 95. The angels announcing the Birth of the Saviour – new that means great joy to all people. We are all hard – pressed to get Christmas gifts – because we all have everything. But there is one thing that we all need and is a Savior, a one size fits all – that can meet all your needs according to His riches in glory ( Phil. 4:19)

*How can the anticipation of the coming of Jesus give you a sense of Joy—even in the midst of troubling times?*

### II. Appreciate Joy (Matt. 2:10–11, James 1:2–3 )

- ♦ **Appreciate the Joy of Salvation** - When the Magi/ Wise men saw the Star that pointed God to where Jesus, the King, the Son of God, and Saviour would be and they had Joy. 2 things; 1) If you are not in Christ if you not saved, that joy you are looking for, the forgiveness you are looking for – you will never find until you come to Christ (We are shining a light on the Gospel so you can find Him) 2) if you have come to Christ and have lost your joy seek Him again and continue to seek Him so you can appreciate His Joy again. **WISE MEN STILL SEEK JESUS.**
- ♦ **Appreciate the Joy in the Savior** – When the wise men came to Jesus and laid their eyes on Him – they were so overjoyed that they broke off gifts costly and precious gifts (gold, Frankincense and Myrrh and presented them to the Jesus. O beloved, when you take time to appreciate all that Jesus is and what He has done for you – It will be a joy come to service, a Joy give to give our all, Joy to sacrifice our resources to the Lord in Joy. And when we consider and appreciate all that the Lord has done and who you are in Him and what you have in Him – we ought to enjoy giving Him our best. Let’s commit to giving Him the sacrifice of Praise.

- ♦ **Appreciate the Joy in Suffering** – Now as we move through our discussion of Joy – I don't want to play fast and loose with you— even as we have the Joy of Christ, we are not exempt from suffering. In fact, one of the ways the God grows and proves our faith is through suffering. In other words, the things you are going through are not God abandoning you – but God using you, to grow you and demonstrate to others that you can still love and trust God in the most difficult circumstances. That's why James, the half – brother of Jesus says count it all Joy when faces all kinds of trials – and let that joy keep you going.

*How does recalling the things that the Lord has done in your life build a foundation for Joy?*

### III. Appropriate Joy (1 Thess. 5:16-18, John 15:9 – 11)

- ♦ **Appropriate Joy with Thanksgiving** – In this letter to the Church in Thessalonica Paul's tells them that despite the persecution, and the seeming delay in the return of Christ – to rejoice or have joy always. Now tied to being able to rejoice at all times is to be **thankful** for all God has already done for you. To rejoice – literally means to **rehearse joy**. In other words, we can appropriate or maintain Joy by looking back over our lives and thanking Him for what He has already done. (saving, delivering, providing, fighting for us)
- ♦ **Appropriate Joy by Obeying** – As we move forward, we are looking at a portion of Jesus words to His disciples before going to the Cross. Jesus lets His disciples that the true source of Joy is found in obeying His commandments. Some of have lost our joy because we haven't been obedient to the Lord. You will never have true joy in Christ – while living in willful and known disobedience to Him. Beloved, there is no greater joy than being obedient and doing what the Lord told you to do.
- ♦ **Appropriate Joy by Abiding** – Finally, Jesus says to us if you abide in Me and my Word abides in You, your joy will be full, or you will be full of joy. A church, a community, a family a person that is abiding in Christ will be full of Joy. Beloved Joy is harder to find and even harder to maintain once you do find it. So, this is not the time, to break connection or to be lackadaisical in our relationship and proximity to our Lord Jesus Christ, to His people and to His Church. As Jesus abides in us and we abide in Him, we will have exceeding and abundant joy.

There was a Pastor that sent his parents a microwave oven one Christmas. Here's how he recalls the experience:

"They were excited that now they, too, could be a part of the instant generation. When Dad unpacked the microwave and plugged it in, literally within seconds, the microwave transformed two smiles into frown!

Even after reading the directions, they couldn't make it work. "Two days later, my mother was playing bridge with a friend and confessed her inability to get that microwave oven even to boil water. 'To get this darn thing to work,' she exclaimed, 'I really don't need better directions; I just needed my son to come along with the gift!'"

When God gave the gift of salvation, he sends a book of wonderful instructions for us to figure out discover that how we can know His Son and top it off He sent his Son along with the word

- ♦ He Son Jesus was sent – not wrapped in silver and Gold – but wrapped as in flesh and in swaddling clothes.
- ♦ He was sent to preach and to teach to heal and deliver
- ♦ He was sent to go to a cross – to die in our place
- ♦ He was sent die and be buried and experience death and the grave
- ♦ O but there is a reason to rejoice for He conquered the grave on 3rd day is alive forevermore.

So we can rejoice, we can have Joy – not just during the Christmas season – O but I have joy despite the Dark times – despite the hard because Jesus, Our God is with us..

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What are some issues of life that threaten to steal your joy this Christmas season?

If you knew for certain that Jesus was returning today, how would that knowledge rearrange your schedule?

What are things that you are thankful for that will help you have more joy in these difficult times?

Who in your life or acquaintance could use the Joy of Christ? Ask the Lord for an open door of opportunity in the coming days.