



St. James Presbyterian Church

A ministry of the Presbyterian Church USA

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SERMON STUDY & DISCUSSION OUTLINE

12.19.2021 – Christmas Story Life Lessons #3 – JOY, in unexpected ways

Luke 2:8-21

Joy is a good emotion, a wonderful feeling to experience especially when things are going well. For the shepherds and Joseph and Mary, joy came upon them in totally unexpected ways. The shepherds were just doing their low-level jobs one evening. Suddenly, they experienced joy in a so unusual fashion. For the parents of Jesus, they could still not believe what was happening to them and what life ahead would be. They knew one thing then. That they were blessed with the gift of joy from God.

Lessons from the shepherds

- *The shepherds reported to work that night not expecting it would be a very different routine!*
- *So unexpected. An angel and later an entire assembly of angelic beings appeared to them with an equally unbelievable news.*
- *Have you ever had something as unexpected like this happen while you were just minding your usual daily tasks? This could suggest God does want to simply surprise you some times.*
- *The shepherds were so fortunate to be chosen to experience this kind of blessing.*
- *As ordinary and simple minded as they were, they knew exactly what they needed to do. That is to spread the word around, in plain joy and language, that they have seen the Savior Jesus!*
- *They were full of joy and so praised and gave glory to God! Good to know they did not own that glory or make something else out of it. They had no other motives but to be thankful for joy!*

Lessons from Joseph and Mary

- *By themselves, they might have been asking themselves, ‘what’s happening?’*
- *A kind of questioning but as well as trusting and believing God for things that were plainly beyond their control.*
- *God speaking through an angel and a dream? A miraculous pregnancy? Wedding plans dramatically changed? Escaping Herod’s killing spree? No place for a decent child birth than a manger? Wise Men from somewhere and lowly shepherds for their first visitors? And they worshiped the baby?*
- *For Joseph and Mary, they took all these with an unusually quiet demeanor and resolve. For Mary, she took everything in her heart.*
- *Both of them experienced joy through so many life-changing ways! In the end, they worshiped God!*
- *Can we always be like Joseph and Mary as to trust and obey God and be blessed with joy?*

Lessons of JOY for yourself

- *When God opens your heart, He gives joy.*
- *When He does, you won’t have enough words to explain but simply thank God. You will be changed.*

When was the last time an unexpected situation brought you so much joy, like you have not experienced before? Has that changed you? For good?