

From Pastor's Desk...

Joy to the world; I am one of them

There are people in the history who pursued joy in every avenue imaginable: atheism, pleasure, money, position, education, games, night clubs, military power and so on. We realize that real joy is found in the story of Jesus Christ in whom we find God and humanity are met. Instead of a philosophical basis, we have theological foundation upon which life is to be firmly built up. It is the good news, the power of the gospel that made our life qualitatively different. The scope of the joy is the whole world regardless of race, color, caste, and gender.

The joyous event in history was not announced to dignitaries in palaces but to lowly Shepherds working in the night shift. The angel moves first to calm their fears. The message they bring is very good news that results in great joy. The major offices of Jesus are revealed in one sentence which declares Jesus is the Savior, Christ and the Lord (Luke 2:8-10).

- Jesus is the Savior of the world from their sins. God is ready to meet people wherever they are, no matter how dreadful their sins may seem. Sin is manifested in various forms: self-centeredness, rebellion, disharmony with God and others etc.
- Jesus is the Christ to liberate and heal people. He is the anointed one of God. The Prophetic, Priestly, and Kingly offices are fulfilled in Him. The Nazareth manifesto (Luke 4:18-19) clearly affirmed the mission of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus is the Lord to guide and rule over all. It is a very relevant declaration in the context, emperors were addressed and worshipped as lords in the first Century. Jesus is the Lord over Sin, Satan, sickness, death and nature. He is worthy to be worshipped and honored for he is the Lord in our life past, present and future.

As a 3rd Century man was anticipating death, he penned the last words to a friend, it's a bad world, but I have discovered in the midst, a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found joy thousand times greater than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they have overcome the world. These people are the Christians- and I am one of them.

In His Glorious Ministry,

Rev. K. P. Mathew
(Senior Pastor, IPC Hebron, Los Angeles)

The Greatest Joy

(Sis. Sherin Varughese, Sunday school Teacher)

Once there lived a guy named Bill. He was a college student who went to college with one pair of clothes throughout the four years due to his financial difficulties. In his last year of college, he came to know about Christ and decided to go to a local church to attend Sunday worship.

As he walked into the church, everyone started to stare at him because he had wild hair, T-shirt with holes, torn jeans and no shoes. Since the church was packed, Bill couldn't find a place and got closer to the pulpit and, he just squats down right on the carpet.

People were very uncomfortable with seeing Bill and looked at him in a judgmental manner. An elder of the church, who is in his eighties, a godly man, started walking toward this boy with the help of his cane. Everyone thought the elder was going to ask the young man to leave.

But to everyone's surprise this elderly man drop his cane on the floor and with great difficulty he lowers himself and sits down next to Bill. Bill's heart was filled with joy and worshiped the Lord.

Everyone chokes up with emotion. When the minister sees this, he says, "What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget. Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read."

In our lives the real joy is only found in Christ alone. Even small gestures could change a person's life forever. Christ loved us in our darkest state and today he is asking us to do the same to others around us. He wants you to be his hands and feet. So, in this season of celebrations, let us spread joy to one another by having a warm smile, a listening ear, a grateful attitude, a heart of service, encouraging words, kind actions, and selfless love. Above all, introduce the greatest joy to the world, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to others through our lives and actions.

