

Presbyterian Church of Henderson

Worship Service 10:00 AM

December 13, 2020

The Good News of Emmanuel

Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements Sarah Hardy

Organ Prelude Kristin Jones, Director of Music

Lighting of the Advent Candle - JOY

Susan Thomas and Billie Richert

*Call to Worship

The Promised One of God brings good news to the oppressed and binds up the brokenhearted.

We are witnesses to the light of Christ!

The Promised One of God proclaims liberty to captives and release to prisoners.

We are witnesses to the light of Christ!

The Promised One of God comforts all who mourn and gives a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

Rejoicing always, praying without ceasing, holding fast to what is good, we are witnesses to the light of Christ!

*Hymn PH 22 Angels, from the Realms of Glory

1 Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story
Now proclaim Messiah's birth.

Refrain:

Come and worship, come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!

2 Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing;

Yonder shines the infant light:

3 Sages, leave your contemplations,
Brighter visions beam afar;
Seek the great Desire of nations;
Ye have seen His natal star.

4 All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
Evermore your voices raising
To the eternal Three in One.

*Call to Confession

Old habits and new wrongs wear ruts through our lives and relationships. But God is able to restore us. Like water coursing through a desert, the waters of baptism flow through us, reminding us that we belong to God and are raised to new life.

*Prayer of Confession (unison)

Merciful God, you love justice; why, then, do we persist in wrongdoing and every form of evil? You have given us the gift of your Spirit; why, then, do we quench the Spirit among us? You have given us the words of the prophets and the Word himself; why, then, do we despise and ignore what we have heard from you? You have sent the light into the world; why, then, have we loved darkness rather than light? Forgive us. Restore us. Till and tend us as your garden until righteousness and

**praise spring up, for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.
Amen.**

***Assurance of Pardon**

In Jesus Christ, the Lord has done great things for us! Even if we have gone out in tears, God brings us home shouting for joy. Thanks be to God: we are forgiven!

***Passing the Peace**

Please turn and bow to someone out of respect and love— “The peace of Christ be with you”

***Gloria Patri (PH 579)**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

Holy One, giver of life and light, as your word is read and proclaimed, illumine our hearts and minds, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, our lives may reflect God’s glory. Amen.

First Reading Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD’S favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

Special Music **David’s Lyre**

Second Reading Luke 2:8-12

In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger."

Children's Sermon Pastor Eric

- At Christmas when you open the present that you have always wanted, what do you do?
- Do you twirl your fingers saying "Woo Who!"
- Or do you get up and do a Happy Dance?
- *Isaiah 61:10 "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God"*
- This is saying when we have joy in the Lord, it is not a twirling of your fingers "Woo Who," but it is always a Happy Dance!
- Today in the sermon we talk about JOY, those who have Jesus in their hearts can have JOY that praises God with their whole lives.
- This means because of all that God has done for us, everyday is a a Happy Dance!

SERMON "Finding Joy in the Emmanuel"

Selected Texts - Luke 2:8-12

INTRO:

- Today we continue in our series, "The Good News of the Emmanuel" where we will look at Finding Joy in the Emmanuel.
- Last week we looked at Finding Peace in the Emmanuel, and today
- When I was a student at Cal Poly Pomona, I used to go to church on 2nd St. and Evergreen in East LA.....not the best neighborhood in town.
- I remember the day my car was broken into and my backpack was stolen.
- The windows were rolled down, the door was left open.
- I never felt so violated.
- Of course it doesn't help to leave something like that in the front seat out in the open.
- Now I take every precaution to make sure my car is secure.
- Have you ever been robbed? Do you remember the feeling of violation you had felt when the crime occurred?
- During the Christmas season there is a robbery that occurs each year that affects every one of our lives if we do not take the necessary precautions to prevent it.
- We need to protect our JOY.
- The dictionary defines joys as "feelings of great happiness or pleasure, especially of an elevated or spiritual kind"
- Every day there are forces in our society that, like a prowling lion, desires to rob the joy of Christ from us.
- Scriptures tells us that God wants us to have joy

- *John 15:11* I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
- This morning I want to share with you six principles from Scripture that tells us how to practice joy on a regular basis especially for this Christmas season

1. Joy is RECEIVED in doing the will of God

John 17:13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves.

- Interesting here, that in Jesus' final moments before he went to the cross, he talks about joy.
- He is very aware of his pending suffering as well as the coming challenges of the disciples.
- In Jesus' classic prayer for the disciples, he prays for the disciples, knowing that they will face opposition that will rob them of the fullness of Jesus' joy.
- What is this joy that is being made complete?
- It begins with the message of the angel to the shepherds,
- *Luke 2:10-11* "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a **Savior**, who is the **Messiah**, the **Lord**"
- This is what all of Israel had been waiting for hundreds of years.
- Jesus Christ is to be the Savior of the world as well as the long awaited Messiah.
- This is an announcement of joy because Jesus had come as the Messiah and Savior
- So Jesus' mission is one of bringing joy to the world, and it had to be completed with the pain, suffering, death and resurrection of the Emmanuel.
- In one sense, Jesus was praying for the future joy of the disciples being made complete in them.
- **The joy that Jesus had was a fulfillment of doing God's will in his life.**
- Friends, there is no greater joy in life than knowing that God is using you exactly according to His purposes.
- EX: I was with a group of pastors where we shared a moment where you felt the closest to God. Almost everyone shared about a time when they had the most joy because they were doing exactly will of God in their lives.

2. Joy is EMBRACED during times of suffering

James 1:2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds,

- This text explains that joy CAN BE embraced during times of difficulty and suffering.
- Why? Because of the positive effects joy has to offer:

James 1:3-4 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. 4 Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

- Perseverance
- Maturity
- Completeness
- Joy here during difficult times is really a choice.

- You can choose to be joyful during these times, or you can let the joy be robbed from you and never grow from your situation.
- You can say, "Oh poor me, life is terrible" OR
- You can say, "The joy of the Lord is my strength!"
- When the Lord is your strength, you can persevere through difficult times
- Are any of you facing various trials at this time of the year as we live through this pandemic?
- **Don't ask to be removed from the suffering, but ask God to give you strength to endure it.**
- ILL: In West Africa there is a cranberry like fruit called the Sweet Berry or Miracle Fruit. The meat of the fruit contains a protein called miraculin that binds to the tongue's taste buds, changing the person's sense of taste so that everything eaten seems sweet, even sour foods.
- In the same way, joy is like the miracle fruit. When we encounter the sourness of life's challenges, we can have joy because it has the ability to make the most sour circumstances into the sweetness of maturity and perseverance.

3. Joy is EXPRESSED in worship before God

Psa. 68:3-4 But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. 4 Sing to God, sing praise to his name, extol him who rides on the clouds — his name is the LORD — and rejoice before him.

- In the context of this Psalm, David expresses joy before the Lord for all God has done and what God will do.
- David is joyfully celebrating God's covenant promises where God delivers and comforts the downtrodden and the oppressed.
- Then, the psalm looks forward to the time when God will dwell from a single location to be His permanent sanctuary on a hill.
- In worship, joy is never about ourselves, but it is ALL about God.
- It is helpful for the worshipper to think backwards to the blessings of God's past, and to look forward to the future where all nations will gather before the throne and worship God.
- When we hear about people not being able to worship in a certain church, it is because the church was evaluated upon what the person liked or did not like, but worship is supposed to be a place where we think about the goodness and the hope of God, and praise and rejoice God.
- Worship is about singing to the Lord our praises.
- It is nothing about the music styles.
- The text says, "May the righteous (God's people) be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful."
- The true measure of your heart and preparation for worship is by asking the question: Do I walk away from worship more joyful?
- Presbyterians are known for our "stiff" expressions of worship and when it comes to praying to the Lord, we tend to be a little inhibited.
- There is a reason why we are labeled in other communions the "frozen chosen."
- EX: An outdoor conference at a Presbyterian church in Omaha. The planners wanted to help these Presbyterians to visually display their praise to the Lord since Presbyterians, aren't free to say "Hallelujah, Praise the Lord." People were given helium filled balloons and told to release them at some point in the service when they felt like expressing the joy in their hearts. All through the

service balloons were released, but when it was over 1/3 of the balloons were still unreleased.

- Isn't that amazing?
- We seem to have a problem praising the Lord.
- Well, its not me to do a Happy Dance!
- Isn't it interesting, we make more noise cheering for our favorite football or basketball team than we do for God.
- Friends, when you are in worship, let your "balloon" go.
- Feel free to express what ever your heart desires in praise and adoration to the Lord.

4. Joy is ENJOYED during times of celebration with others

Ecclesiastes 9:7 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for it is now that God favors what you do.

- In the text prior to this verse, Solomon is asserting the brevity of life, but also the fact that the reality of joy can occur when God has invaded our lives.
- Solomon is saying in this text, that in light of the brevity of life, enjoy yourself.
- Enjoy food, drink, clothing, and family union because all these form the basis of a good life which comes from God
- Some say it is sinful to have a good time with others.
- They say that it is hedonistic or too self-indulgent.
- But there were periods of Israel's history when they were living in God's blessing where God said Go ahead, celebrate with food and wine, experience the joy of living in God's favor.
- So during the holidays, if you dare to gather with family and friends, enjoy it and experience the joy that comes from the Lord.
- Ever notice in family gatherings where there is tension: joy is robbed, the food is not eaten in gladness, and it becomes difficult to tell if there is any indication of God's blessing and favor.
- Friends, we cannot let poor relationships of dysfunctional families hinder the joy that God bestows upon you.
- Notice the last part of the text.
- *For it is now that God favors what you do.*
- Have you ever let yourself ponder the fact that God favors what you do?
- Too often we live with this impression that we have never really earned God's favor, or we have to reach a certain level of good in order to appreciate and enjoy God's favor.
- But the truth of the matter is that because of the grace of God, we DO have God's favor.
- Allow the holidays be a time to reflect that God smiles upon you, loves you, and blesses you with good things.

5. Joy is CULTIVATED in Christian relationships

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

- Nothing brings more joy to a Christian than the fact that you had some part in the spiritual development of a person's life.

- EX: I remember when I went back to visit my first church, a few families were very excited to tell me that their children were either involved in youth ministry at the church or planning to go to seminary so that they could become a pastor.
- This is why Paul looked upon these people with so much affection.
- Thomas Constable says in the Bible Knowledge Commentary, "They were everything that was worth anything to Paul. They were his **hope**; their development was what he lived for as a parent lives to see his children grow up to maturity, to produce and reproduce. They were his **joy**, they filled his life with sunshine as he thought of what they used to be, what they had become, and what they would be by the grace of God. They were his **crown**; they themselves were the symbol of God's blessing on his life and ministry. They were his glory and joy, and not only his but also the glory and joy of his companions in labor. Paul said in essence, "When life is over and we stand in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming, you Thessalonians will be our source of glory and joy; you mean that much to us."
- Q: Have you ever had relationships within the church that meant that much to you?
- One way to experience God's joy, pour yourself into the life of someone around you.
- That why I am a big proponent of mentoring relationships.
- We must be a mentor to others as well as take the time to be mentored ourselves.
- A mentoring relationship does not have to be a formal I know more and have to impart this knowledge to you, but it is life on life where you share life together.
- Some of the greatest times of personal spiritual growth has occurred in these types of relationships.

6. Joy is EXPERIENCED when Jesus is Savior and Lord

Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

- The Emmanuel is God with us in Jesus Christ who desires to be your Savior and Lord.

1/19/11: Twenty-four year old Nejdra Nance grew up in Bridgeport, CT, in a family where she never quite felt she belonged, so much so that she spent time searching missing persons websites looking for an answer. Then one day she came across the picture of 19 day old Carlina White who disappeared from her hospital bed on August 4, 1987. As she looked at the pictures she became convinced that she must be this missing child. She reached out to the missing baby's mother, Joy White, and with the help of the NYPD and DNA testing, it was confirmed that Nejdra Nance was really Carlina White.

It all started with a "feeling" that she just didn't belong. The nagging feeling lead to a search. Says Nance's biological grandmother, Elizabeth White, 71. "She searched, and then she found Joy."

- My prayer for you this Advent season, is that you will find the true joy that is found in giving your life to the leadership and lordship of Jesus Christ.

1. Joy is RECEIVED in doing the will of God
2. Joy is EMBRACED during times of suffering
3. Joy is EXPRESSED in worship before God
4. Joy is ENJOYED during times of celebration with others
5. Joy is CULTIVATED in Christian relationships
6. Joy is EXPERIENCED when Jesus is Savior and Lord

Offering

At this time of year, the abundance of some and the needs of so many stand in marked contrast. As we bring now our tithes and offerings, may Christ's heart rejoice and the needs of others be tended.

***Doxology**

Praise God from whom all blessing flow. Praise Him all creatures here below.
Praise him above the heavenly host. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

***Prayer of Dedication**

Gracious God, teach us to give thanks in all circumstances, for you are always with us. Thank you for the privilege of sharing what we have with others, of giving ourselves away in love, and of receiving the gifts that others share with us. With our whole being, spirit and soul and body, we rejoice in you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Affirmation of Faith** (Apostle's Creed)

Minister:

Brothers and Sisters in Christ, what do you believe?

All:

I BELIEVE in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

Prayers of the People

God who restores, you have done great things for us and we rejoice!

So often you have filled us with laughter, even turning tears of sadness into shouts of joy.

You send prophets, who point the way to justice and show the way to you.

We thank you for sending good news to us and repairing so much that we have devastated.

In this season of light, we lift up in prayer so many who wait in darkness: people oppressed by poverty and discrimination, by political upheaval or dangerous rulers; people imprisoned wrongly and also those imprisoned justly.

Right what is wrong among us and in us and restore us to you, to others, to ourselves.

Make the brokenhearted whole again; comfort those who mourn; repair our ruined cities.

In all the jostling and jingling of these days, do not let us lose sight of you or those whom you especially came to serve: people who are in need of healing, people who are overlooked or underserved, the ones who are lost, and the ones we have made to feel little and least. Light of the world, live among us always, full of grace and truth, and now, with confidence as children of God, let us pray:

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory forever. Amen.

***Hymn** PH 53 "What Child is This?"

1 What Child is this who, laid to rest
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet
While shepherds watch are keeping?

Refrain:

This, this is Christ the King,
Whom shepherds guard and angels sing;
Haste, haste, to bring Him laud,
The Babe, the Son of Mary!

2 Why lies He in such mean estate,
Where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here
The silent Word is pleading.

3 So bring Him incense, gold, and myrrh,
Come one and all, to own Him.
The King of kings salvation brings;
Let loving hearts enthrone Him.

***Benediction**

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace both now and evermore.

***Organ Postlude** (please be seated for the postlude)