

SERIES: CHRISTMAS BREAKTHROUGH  
PART 4: DISCOVERING JOY

Merry Christmas, everyone. Welcome to our first PJ's and Pancakes. Two days from today is Christmas. I want to share with you quickly how you experience your own Christmas Breakthrough by discovering joy. I want us to look at how **JOY CAN BE YOURS** by looking through the eyes of the shepherds in Luke chapter 2. For the next few, minutes let's look at **How to make joy yours on a daily basis**. There are two action steps that you and I can take.

## I. Expect joy

In order to experience joy you must expect joy. The expectation of joy is an act of faith. Because of Christmas, you can know that God knows who you are, where you are and just what you need at this very moment. 1 Chronicles 16:27 says, "**Honor and majesty surround Him; strength and joy fill His dwelling.**" One of the characteristic traits of God's dwelling place is joy. As you choose to be conscious of God's presence with you every second of every day there is this deep sense of satisfaction that fills your life.

### A. Realize joy can be found right where you are

This is a very positive reality. As I set my expectation for a joy-filled life, I don't have to go somewhere to experience it. Joy isn't somewhere else—it is right here. I get to have the

same experience that the shepherds had. Please read out loud with me Luke 2:8-9. **“That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified...”**. The shepherds had a rather boring life. Every now and then there would be some excitement, but it was during the routine of their lives that God shows up. It was life as normal, business as usual and God gives them joy. God has designed you to experience joy wherever you are, because He is with you. If you have surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit is living on the inside of you, then you have instant access to the joy of Jesus. Things don’t have to change—you just have to realize that, as you set your expectation for joy, you can experience God’s presence and involvement in your life wherever you are and whatever you’re doing.

## **B. Know that joy comes from God’s involvement in your life**

The Bible says that it is in God’s presence that there is strength and there is joy. Please read out loud with me Luke 2:10-11 **“...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.’”** The angel says to the shepherds, **“Joy to the world, because today your Savior has been born.”** The ultimate gift God could ever give to us is Himself as a human. On the

first Christmas morning God became like one of us so that we could become like Him. Loved ones, when you understand this it truly changes your life. Why could Jesus bring us joy? Why are we made for joy? Because it was Jesus who came to free us from our own sin. He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows who was acquainted with the deepest grief. It was our weaknesses, our diseases and sicknesses and our sorrows. The nails, the crown of thorns, the spear in the side was the price He paid for our rebellion. Isaiah says He was crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. It was Jesus presenting Himself as our sin offering, the Lamb of God who came to take the sins of the world on Himself so we could be considered as righteous before our Father. The result: the ultimate involvement of Jesus Christ created us for joy.

## **II. Choose joy**

There are three choices in our text that the shepherds model for us to make:

### **A. Go see**

The first choice is that you are willing to go see Jesus and relate to Him for yourself. It is great to hear the story of how Jesus has changed other people's lives. Maybe you're here today because of the change in your husband, or your wife, or your son or daughter or friend. I commend you for being with us. You are coming and seeing. You need to do what the shepherds did. You need to check Jesus out. Bethlehem really

happened. It's not just a story that somebody made up. It really happened. Jesus has changed countless billions of people's lives throughout history. The shepherds and the wise men came. It is a historically attested fact. The Encyclopedia Britannica says it is the most historically attested fact in human history, in any test of history. If you're a guest with us today we have a free gift for you. We have a myriad of books that you can choose for your gift. I highly recommend two books by Lee Stroebel. **The Case for Christ** and **The Case for Faith**. If you haven't read these books they are must reads for you.

If you are a Christian and you're saying I want this kind of joy to be my experience every second of the day, then just do what the shepherds did. See Jesus every day. Please read with me Luke 2:15-16, **“When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, ‘Let's go to Bethlehem. Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.’ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the Baby, lying in the manger.”**

## **B. Go tell**

After you go and see that Jesus is who He says He is and you begin to experience His joy on an ongoing basis, then you go and tell. This is what the shepherds did. Please read out loud with me Luke 2:17-18, **“After seeing Him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this Child. <sup>18</sup>All who heard the**

**shepherds' story were astonished.”** Go and tell. This is an important principle of joy. You don't bottle it. You don't keep it to yourself. It will turn sour every time. This is part of sharing your faith. You get to share with others what a difference Jesus Christ has made and is making in your life. This is how others get to experience the joy of Jesus. You tell them about Him and the changes He has and is making in your life. Please read Psalm 107:2 with me, let's begin, **“Has the Lord redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others He has redeemed you from your enemies.”**

### **C. Go rejoice**

One of the leading evidences of the joy of Jesus in your life is that you live a life of rejoicing, gratitude and thankfulness for what Jesus has and is doing in your life. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> thing the shepherds did. Please read Luke 2:20 with me out loud, let's begin, **“The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.”**

The shepherds went back to their sphere of influence and found joy there. That is what God wants for you and me this season. He wants you to take His joy home with you. Take it to your school. Take it to your work. Take Jesus' joy to your family, friends and enemies. Joy doesn't have anything to do with our circumstances; it has everything to do with knowing that God is in control of our lives and the situations we find ourselves in. Joy is a deep satisfaction that comes from God to strengthen us. Joy becomes a major part of God's

provision when we face various tests and difficulties, because we need a strength that does not come from ourselves. After Mary had become pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit, her cousin Elizabeth told her that she was blessed because she believed that the Lord would do what He said. Mary responded in Luke 1:46-47, **“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!”** Mary saw, told others and rejoiced in what God was doing in her life.

Christmas shouts at us that we were made for joy. First EXPECT JOY. This Christmas raise your expectations. Expect it in your present circumstances. Know that Joy comes from God’s involvement in your life. Secondly, choose joy. Go see Jesus for yourself then go tell someone and then go and rejoice. **Pray**