

Reference: LUKE 2:8-14

Church: GRACE DATE:12/20/98

Good News of Great Joy for all people

Purpose: To consider the message of the angels to the shepherds outside Bethlehem and to use it to call sinners to Christ

1. People Living in Darkness (Isaiah 9)

The world we live in is in a mess

Problems abroad–Iraq, Indonesia, Baltic, Russia

Problems in this country–

We have immorality in our leaders

Breaking vows of faithfulness, vows of truthfulness

Drug abuse, violence, theft, child abuse,

sexual immorality everywhere

Problems in our homes

Broken marriages,

Parents murder children

Children murder each other

Children murder parents

Problems in our hearts –

Broken promises, hurtful words, hateful thoughts, malice, envy

Problems Everywhere – if you don't turn a blind eye

We spend most of our time blaming others for all this – GOD?

But in the Bible God points the finger at you and me

We are full of greed, selfishness, pride, envy, and lust

These first appeared in Adam & Eve

They didn't want to obey God's law - knew better

So they rebelled – they sinned and received punishment

God placed the whole creation under a curse

Adam and Eve acted on our behalf

So we inherit the guilt of their sin

We inherit God's curse and are born spiritually dead

Cut of from God and His enemies by nature

We disobey God's Law and reject Him as our Lord

Scripture calls us the objects of His wrath

We reap the consequences of our sin in this world

Answer to His absolute justice and holiness on the Last Day

No exceptions:

All have sinned and fallen short of His glory – none righteous

History shows us this is true -

Our learning hasn't changed us

Science hasn't changed us

Philosophy hasn't changed us

Political systems haven't changed us

We can't change ourselves so God could accept us

The problem is in our hearts

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"

That is why the world is the way it is – and it's bad news

This is God's diagnosis of our problem in the Bible

2. Good News of Great Joy (2:10)

Strange way to start a Christmas message?

Nothing much to celebrate so far!

Didn't angel tell shepherds he was bringing good news?

Luke 2:10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;

Yes but spiritual darkness and hopelessness in the world

Are what make Christmas events such Good News!

Can't have truly happy Christmas until you grasp problem

If all was well with world - no need for Christmas

It wouldn't have happened!

What was this Good News the angel spoke of?

A baby had been born

Let's see what the angel tells us about this baby –

- Who was he?
- What was the reason for his birth?
- Why is this good news to us tonight?

3. Who was this baby?

11 for today in the city of David there has been born ... Christ the Lord.

Christ is another word for Messiah

It was the Messiah who had been born!

This was the one God had promised for 1000's of years

Right back when Adam and Eve fell

God promised Messiah to undo the effects of their sin

Through the OT we learn more and more

How He would come – Where He would be born

What He would do - How He would die & rise again - readings

Messiah – Anointed One

Prophet, Priest and King

Prophet to speak to man from God

Priest to speak to God on man's behalf

He would bridge the gap between God and mankind

The gap caused by our sin.

King to rule over His people forever

But also the LORD

Lord used of God Himself – e.g. 1:9

It means the Sovereign ruler

The owner of all – the Creator of all.

This child who had been born was God Himself!

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace

Immanuel – God with us

Our God, contracted to a span

Incomprehensibly made man

Perfect for the role of go-between

This is the angel's description of the child

The Anointed One, The Sovereign Lord

Born into a world full of sin and sorrow!

Is this your Christ? God, the Anointed One, the Lord of all?

4. What had He come to do?

As God, He might have come to judge – but He didn't

That is coming later

He might have come to destroy – but He didn't

That is coming later, too

What did the angel say?

Luke 2:11 for today in the city of David there has been born for you a **Savior**...

Matthew 1:21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people **from their sins.**"

He came to save His people – from their sins!

While this world goes from bad to worse, God has chosen to save

some from the judgment and punishment to come

He came to do what they could never do for themselves

To save them from sins and change their hearts

His name, Jesus, means, "Jehovah is Salvation"

Psalm 98:1-2 Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. 2 The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.

God the Son came into the world to save people

Left Heaven and entered a sinful world

How was He going to save His people?

By keeping God's law perfectly on their behalf

Which they could never do

God's law condemns us all at every turn

The standard is perfection and we do not qualify

But He does & can give His righteousness to His people

Just as Adam's sin was credited to us all,

Now His perfect obedience and righteousness are credited to His people

But then He received the just punishment for His people's sin

That's what happened on the cross.

He endured the anger of God that should have been directed at His people

He endured their Hell in their place

He was their substitute, paid their debt

God the Father crushed Him so He could set His people free.

This was God's gift at the first Christmas

He was giving His own Son to die so that sinners might be saved

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

5. Why is this good news tonight?

Because you do not have to remain under God's curse!
You don't have to perish in Hell under God's holy condemnation
There is a way out – God's Savior can save you
A remedy for the sick human heart! The Physician of the soul!
A new life instead of spiritual death
Light instead of darkness
God's salvation for sinful men and women
You can have God as your friend and Father
No longer as your enemy
No wonder angels talked of peace on earth!
Peace between God and man – no longer enemies
God and sinners reconciled!
How can this be yours?
You have to acknowledge your sin before Him
Confess it and then renounce it – put it behind you
You have to turn to Christ and believe on Him
Trust Him and Him alone to save you by His perfect life and
sacrificial death
Like Noah and the Ark – had to go in – trust it would save
Then you will be His – SAVE HIS PEOPLE

6. Why Great Joy?

The angel said it was good news of great joy
Deep and indescribable joy when you know forgiveness
Here is the key to a truly happy Christmas
Blessed (happy) are they who mourn (over sin)
Why? Because when you are mourning for your sin
You see you need a Savior and when you receive Him
You are comforted
The world knows nothing of this but you can!

7. For all people?

This is what the angel said
Doesn't this mean all will be saved?
No – that's not what the Bible teaches
But it does mean that the offer of salvation goes out to all

It does mean that God will save people from all walks of life
It wasn't simply for the Jews; it was for all nations
As God had promised to Abraham, he was now fulfilling
All nations were to be blessed through Messiah
It wasn't simply for the rich and famous
He was born in a stable in a poor family
His birth was announced to shepherds!
Theologians and religious leaders stayed away (this morning)
God's salvation is offered freely to all
And I offer it to you
This good news is for you if you will receive it
Do you know this Savior?
Is Christ, the Anointed One, the sovereign ruler over all yours?
Come to Him and plead with Him to save you – now!
Then you will know what a happy Christmas really is!