

Simple Christmas 2 – Simple Joy

Simple Christmas Bumper

Welcome to Redemption Church. My name is Chris Fluitt, and I am glad to share the Word of God with you today. Welcome to everyone in the room and everyone joining us online.

It is December, and everyone has turned their attention to the Christmas season.

We feel like this season has become far too complex and hectic. And we are suggesting that we enjoy a simple Christmas this year.

Simple Christmas

This is #KeepItSimpleSeason. We need to take a step from the complex and the hectic and step into the simple this season.

This December, I want you to deliberately make some decisions to in your life and home to choose the SIMPLE over the complex and hectic.

Focus on the simple reason for the season. The birth of Jesus is what Christmas should be about.

Last week we told you about a simple peace. Joseph and Mary had relationship problems and provision problems, but in the end they were together and with God – and that was enough.

Today I want us to find simple joy.

Simple Joy

What is keeping you from experiencing joy this season?

Worry? What are you worried about?

- Worried about what others think?
- Worried about the choices other will make?
- Worried about the economic future?
- Worried about the results of medical exam?

Worry can rob you of joy. The fear of uncertainty is the enemy of joy.

You can't be joyful and fearful at the same time

Fear & joy cannot occupy the same space.

Are you occupied with fear or joy today?

If you are occupied with fear, are you ready to change that?

Do you often flip back and forth from joy to fear. From one moment to the next you might be joyful or fearful and you lack true stability. At any moment the phone could ring and you are goodbye joy and hello fear.

Simple Joy

The original Christmas story teaches us about a simple joy.

Now remember, the original Christmas story is not simple. The original Christmas story was complex and hectic.

4 different times God instructs the characters of that original Christmas to “fear not.”

There was a lot of fear and worry during that first Noel.

Out of control worry

Most of our worry is over things out of our control.

I listed some things that might be worrying you earlier...

- Worried about what others think?
- Worried about the choices other will make?
- Worried about the economic future?
- Worried about the results of medical exam?

All of these worries are out of the scope of your influence. We often worry about things we can't control.

That original Christmas story was full of out-of-control worry.

The Roman Government

Who can control the government? We recently had elections in the United States and there was a spike in worry.

Luke 2:1-4 (NIV) In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

Most know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. Often overlooked is the fact that neither Joseph or Mary lived in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth in the area of Galilee.

Nazareth is northern Israel and Bethlehem is southern Israel and is around 70 miles in distance. The terrain between these regions is mountainous and could have caused them to travel as far as 90 miles on this journey.

Mary, while late in pregnancy was riding on a donkey through rough terrain. They

estimate that it to nearly 5 days to make this journey.

When you are in the late stages of pregnancy you should not travel far from home, and yet here is Mary. Mary & Joseph would have never chosen on their own to make this journey, but it was out of their control.

A guy that they did not know who lived in a palace in Rome had decided they must make this journey. Caesar, the emperor of a world power had decided to take a census and to force everyone to return to their place of origin.

This difficult situation was completely of the control of Joseph and Mary.

Maybe you can relate to an out of your control situation dictating your life...

The king of the Jews?

We know that after Jesus was born some wise man came, following a star. These wisemen went to a man who held the title of king named Herod. And these wisemen did something very foolish... they asked the guy who fancied himself to be king of the Jews, they asked him “where the newborn king was to be found?”

Matthew 2:1-3 (NIV) After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[a] from the east came to Jerusalem 2 and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come

to worship him.” 3 When King Herod
heard this he was disturbed, and all
Jerusalem with him.

Now the magi (wisemen) ended up finding and worshipping Jesus, but they had also caused a great deal of trouble for Joseph & Mary.

Matthew 2:13 When they had gone,
an angel of the Lord appeared to
Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said,
“take the child and his mother and
escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell
you, for Herod is going to search for
the child to kill him.” 14 So he got
up, took the child and his mother
during the night and left for Egypt,

They started in Nazareth, were forced to go to Bethlehem, and now are running for their life to Egypt which was likely a 300 to 400 mile journey.

This was completely out of control. This does not seem like a simple Christmas... How could they possibly experience simple joy?

A lot of us would be unhappy if power out of our control forced us to run for our life far away from our home and country.

But there is a difference between Happiness & Joy.

1 slide

Happiness depends on happenings

Joy depends on God

Happiness is only achieved when the good things happen. And this could be why you are depressed and sad this Christmas season. This could be why you are frustrated and anxious, because you are trying to make the good things happen... and you can only be happy when you make them happen.

Joy is supernatural. Joy comes from God. God's joy does not depend on happenings.

Happiness is about good things.

Joy is about God things.

What are you focused on today?

That complex and hectic original Christmas story had a simple Joy. Joy was present even when things were out of control because Joy is not dependent on things happening.

The wisemen were overjoyed...

Matthew 2:9-10 ...and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10 When they saw the star, they were **overjoyed**.

The Angel told Zechariah that his son John the Baptist would be a joy. John the Baptist is the one who would prepare the way of Jesus.

Luke 1:14 He will be a **joy** and delight to you, and many will **rejoice** because of his birth,

Elizabeth, the mother John the Baptist experienced joy when a pregnant Mary came to her...

Luke 1:44 (NIV) As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for **joy**.

The angels promised goodnews and great joy to the shepherds.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause **great joy for all the people**. 11

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Jesus brings great joy to ALL PEOPLE.

Musician

Joseph and Mary faced things out of their control, but they were never out of God's control.

They were forced to go 70 miles to Bethlehem... but God did that so that we would know this prophecy.

Micah 5:2 (NIV) "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times."

They were forced to go hundreds of miles to Egypt, but that was in God's control also.

Hosea 11:1 (NIV) ... and out of Egypt I called my son.

Simple Joy

Can we shift our focus away from trying to control all the happenings and towards surrendering to the will of God. Joy depends on God.

“But I still have problems... How can I have Joy?”

1 Peter 1:8-10 (NIV) 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are

filled with an inexpressible and
glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving
the end result of your faith, the
salvation of your souls.

Will you joyfully depend on God today?