

Introduction

1. Dear Faithful Christians – “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord”
2. You have come this Christmas Day to celebrate this marvelous birth
3. You KNOW – that this birth is COSMIC... this birth is JOY to the world!

I. The “J” in Joy is for JESUS

- A. The Shepherds were out with their sheep doing what shepherds do
 - i. It was dark – and the shepherds were protecting their sheep from predators
 - ii. Perhaps they were talking about their sheep, or maybe about ruthless Herod
 - iii. Perhaps they were dozing off, or just staring up at the stars – noticing one particularly bright one over Bethlehem
- B. And right in the middle of their lives, and their shepherding routine – An angel appears to them
 - i. The angel spoke the most amazing words!
 - ii. “Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find the baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger”
 - iii. Israel had been waiting for this news since the Fall of Adam and Eve, the world had been groaning with the pains of sin and death - waiting for this day of rescue since sin’s curse hit the world
- C. And the shepherds ran to Bethlehem – to see this thing that has happened
 - i. And when they got to Bethlehem, they found the Baby lying in a manger – and they saw JESUS
 - ii. JESUS – Joy to all the world!
 - iii. This Jesus is the one who has come to save the world from all sin, from eternal death, and from the wicked jaws of the Devil
 - iv. JESUS, the Savior of the world, comes to be the LAMB of the God who takes away the sin of the world
 - v. And this LAMB will come and Shepherd His people, watching over them in this cruel world of sin, and shepherding them and leading them to the eternal green pastures of eternal life

II. The “O” in Joy is for “OPEN”

- A. When the angel announced the birth of Jesus to the Shepherds, the “glory of the Lord” shone around them

- i. This is the joy and jubilation and triumph of every Christian!
- ii. The Shepherds experienced the “opening of heaven!”
- iii. Can we fathom why this is so euphoric?
 - 1. Because up until this time – heaven was closed and locked tight to all humanity!
 - 2. Like a steel trap door – locked a million times over – no sinner can get into heaven
 - 3. Heaven is only for the righteous, the pure, the sinless, the blameless
 - 4. And NONE OF US – are these! For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God
- iv. But now, in all of his Truth and Grace – God comes to earth to open Heaven for all who believe in Him
- v. He has come to die for our sins, to take our curse of death upon Himself...
- vi. And now He unbars the gates of heaven, they fling open wide for all who believe in Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life
- vii. Dear Christian people – because of this day – the GLORY of Lord is revealed to us, heaven is opened to us, and Jesus stands at the gates of heaven with arms open wide to receive us into His eternal kingdom
- viii. This work of God in coming to earth in the Infant Christ is exuberant JOY to all the world!

III. The “Y” in Joy is for “YOU”

- A. The Angel came to the Shepherds and said, “for unto YOU is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord”
 - i. Shepherds were not thought of as social elites, they were not admired, they were not highly regarded
 - ii. The Pharisees and Chief Priests considered the shepherd as the very bottom of the social class
 - iii. They were considered so dirty, physically and spiritually, that they were not even allowed near the temple
 - iv. And yet, the angel announces that the birth of God, the salvation of the world – is FOR THEM, even for Shepherds!
- B. Who are we?
 - i. We are like poor shepherds with ordinary jobs, with ordinary families, struggling through this ordinary life like everyone else
 - ii. None of us here has great fame or glory, and all of us here are lowly human beings
 - iii. Like the dirtiness of the shepherds, we too are dirty – dirty with sin
 - 1. We acknowledge that we fail everyday, that our life is not consistent with the faith we confess, and that we stray from God so very often...

2. We are undeserving of such great Christmas news, we are so unworthy of such great Christmas salvation
- C. But when you read Luke 2, and as you read the angel's announcement – the angel is talking to YOU
- i. God has come for YOU
 - ii. In the sins of your past, in recent mistakes, bumbling through life, in your struggles, pains, hurts, disappointments, and worries – the Almighty and everlasting God comes for YOU, with “healing in His wings”
 - iii. He comes to love you, to forgive you, to rescue, to heal you, and to open His arms to you with the embrace of grace and mercy
 - iv. Wonder of all wonders! Joy of all Joy! - that heaven is opened to YOU, and that because of this DAY – you will be in heaven forever!
 - v. Not only is this JOY to the world! But this is Joy for each and every soul and body this day! Cherish and embrace this gift for you this Day!

Conclusion

1. On that first Christmas – the shepherds did not have a Christmas dinner, probably no one gave them an Ipod for Christmas, and “Jingle Bells” was not playing in the Bethlehem stores...
2. They knew a greater joy, they had experienced a higher delight, their elation was so much more!
3. The Shepherds experienced JESUS – JOY to all the world!
4. And we experience this Joy today as well – “for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find the baby wrapped in bread and wine, you will find the baby lying in His holy Word”
5. Rejoice, O Christian! Your Lord has come! Eternal Salvation is yours today! Amen.