

Joy That Overcomes

the third Sunday of Advent

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Luke 2: 8-14 (NLT)

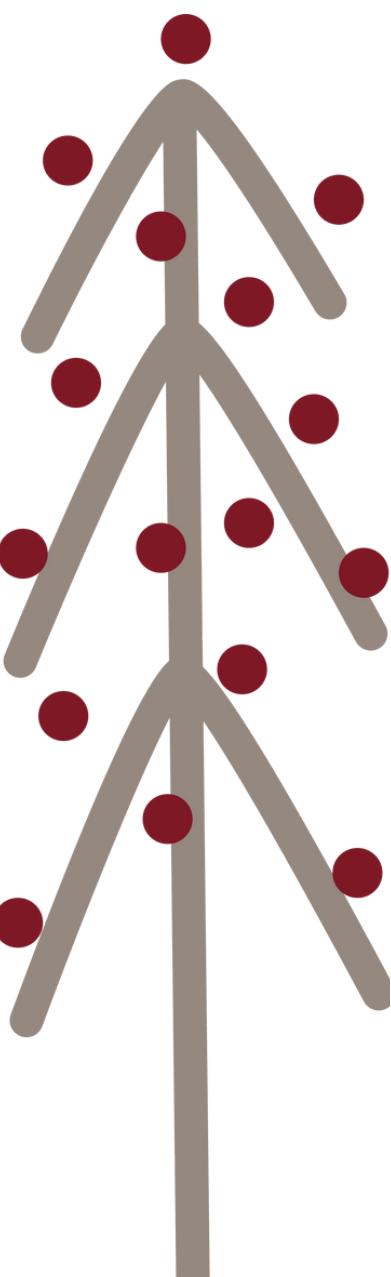
That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them, "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news 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! And you will recognize him by this sign. You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly the angel was joined by a vast host of others-the armies of heaven-praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Proverbs 21:15 (NLT)

Justice is a joy to the godly, but it terrifies evildoers.

Revelation 7:9-10 (NLT)

After this, I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."



*"I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people."
(Luke 2:10)*

Sadly, in our world joy does not come to all people. In 2021 systemic injustice is a stark reality in Canada. The marginalized seldom find joy. The young Black man pulled over for search and questioning simply because he's driving a high-end car filled with Christmas presents or the Indigenous mother followed throughout the store as she shops for her children - these persons find only the shame and humiliation that is part of the daily experience of those who are victims of racism and discrimination.

So where do they find joy?

"The Saviour - yes, the Messiah, the Lord - has been born today in Bethlehem . . ." (Luke 2:11) Here's the joy! It comes to us in Jesus Christ whose shed blood and death on the cross allows God to identify Himself with all of us. God enters our world, and takes upon Himself the pain and suffering of our injustice.

Messiah's coming is meant to bring joy to the lowly and the downtrodden. Isaiah 61:1 says: ". . .the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are 'bound'."

None of us could ever solve the sin problem. We cheat, lie, and manipulate; we are selfish and mean to others, we take advantage of those we perceive to be lesser than ourselves. We oppress, mistreat, and fail to help others in need. The entire purpose of Christ's coming is for humanity to be brought back into right relationship with God. True joy is not a fleeting thing; it should not be equated with happiness.

True joy is found in the surety that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every blessing, miracle, and all that we need is given to us through His coming, death, burial and resurrection. We are all loved by our heavenly Father and saved by His grace. For victims of injustice, Christ's joy brings peace and hope.

True joy resides in the hearts of God's people and allows us to believe and proclaim, "We shall overcome." We are not alone. May we strive to fulfil the promise that indeed, Christ came into the world to bring joy to all people, whether at the top or the bottom of society's ladder. We strive knowing that day one day, justice will prevail.