

December 23, 2018
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
JOY TO THE WORLD: Episode 3
GLAD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY – WHY JESUS CAME
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Luke 2:1-21

At Jesus' birth/*adventus*, the angel declared, "Don't be afraid! I bring you good news of great joy, which shall be to all people." The *awe-circumstances* did not assure happiness, but the deeper *certainities* revealed brought **joy**! Throughout Jesus' life, the "joy set before him" (Hebrews 12:2-3) sustained him – and inspires us! That joy was rooted in **remembering why He came**. Asking "What would Jesus do?" we first embrace "how Jesus saw" his earthly mission. Then, further inspired by Word & Spirit, we find fresh clarity, conviction and power in **our vocation**. A love-song to God & neighbor: ***"Joy to the world, the Lord is come – let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing."*** Kingdom come!

SO WHY DID JESUS COME?

- * "THE FATHER SENT ME... " (mission) JOHN 8:42, 20:21
- * "TO BE A LIGHT TO THE WORLD" (character) JOHN 12:46
- * "TO GIVE LIFE IN ITS FULNESS" (love) JOHN 3:16, 10:10
- * "TO FULFILL THE OT LAW" (promise) MATT 5:17, 22:34-40
- * "TO CALL SINNERS AND SEEK THE LOST" (vocation) MATT 9:13, LUKE 19:10
- * "TO SERVE, AND BE A RANSOM FOR MANY" (sacrifice) MARK 10:45
- * "TO BRING A SWORD" (incision) MATT 10:34; HEB 4:12; EPH 6:17; LUKE 2:35
- * "TO DESTROY THE DEVIL'S WORKS" (triumph) I JOHN 3:8
- * "TO PROCLAIM THE YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR" (2019) LUKE 4:1-21

AND WHY ARE WE HERE?

- * "A student is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for the student to be *like his teacher* and the servant *like his master*." (Matt 10:24-25)
- * "I have set you an *example* that you should do as I have done for you... Now that you *know* these things, you will be *blessed if you do them*." (John 13:14-17)
- * "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. In this way, love is made complete among us... because *in this world we are like Him*. There is no fear in love, but *perfect love drives out fear*." (I John 4:16-18)

YOUR BEST NEXT STEPS?

Hearing "Good News of Great Joy" we grow as people of faith, of hope, and of love following "in his steps" (I Peter 2:21). As Paul said (Philippians 1:3-6), "I thank God every time I *remember* you. In my prayers for all of you, I always *pray with joy*

because of your partnership in the Gospel, confident of this: he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the [coming] Day of Jesus Christ!"

OUR ROOTS: AN ANCIENT HYMN TO CHRIST

The earliest Christian hymn after the NT whose author/composer is known to us is by Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-ca. 215 AD). It concludes his classic Greek treatise entitled *Paedagogus* (The Instructor). English translation of selected verses is by Henry Dexter (1821-1890), pastor in New England. Given the phrasing and meter, it can be sung to many tunes – the most familiar being the “Italian Hymn” of Felice de Giardini (1716-1796). Many will hear echoes of “Come, Thou Almighty King.” Amen!

Shepherd of tender youth, guiding in love and truth – through diverse ways.
Christ our triumphant King, we come Thy name to sing, hither our children bring –
To shout Thy praise!

Thou art our Holy Lord, the all-subduing Word – Healer of strife.
Thou didst thyself abase, and from sin’s deep disgrace, redeem the human race –
Giving us life!

Thou art the great High Priest, Thou hast prepared the feast – of heavenly love.
While in our mortal pain, none calls on Thee in vain, and help dost ne’er disdain –
Help from above!

Ever be Thou our Guide, our Shepherd and our Pride – our Staff and Song.
Jesus, Thou Christ of God, by Thy eternal word, lead us where Thou hast trod –
Make our faith strong!

So now and till we die, sound we Thy praises high – and joyful sing.
Infants and all glad throng, who to Thy Church belong, unite to swell the song –
To Christ our King!