

Daily Devotional, December 4, 2020, He Is Our Joy

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ 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. Luke 2:8-11 (NIV)

During the season of Advent, we light candles on an Advent wreath at church as we count down the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. You may even have an Advent wreath or something similar that you use at home with your family in preparation for Christmas. Each of these candles has a different theme that traditionally accompanies it. These themes are intended to help us as we prepare ourselves to receive the gift of God's grace.

One of the candles we traditionally light is the candle of joy. When I think of the message of joy at Advent, I like to think of the angel appearing to the shepherds in the field.

I love that the angel comes to tell the shepherds they do not need to be afraid, because the message coming is a message of great joy for all people. The Greek word used for angel is "angelos." Literally translated, it means "messenger." The angel that appears is a messenger sent from God to deliver news of great joy. It is interesting to note that the word "angelos" does not necessarily mean a winged supernatural creature with a halo that flies in from the sky. An angel can be anyone who brings a message from God of great joy.

This is a joy that cannot be confined to any particular person or group of people. It is a joy that is so contagious it will fill all people all over the world. It is a joy so pure that it drives out any fear that may inhabit our hearts and inner consciousness. What is amazing is that God reveals His son to those we might least expect. These may have been the shepherds who supplied the lambs for the temple sacrifices that were performed for the forgiveness of sins. Here the angels invited these shepherds to greet the lamb of God who would take away the sins of the whole world forever.

In this season of Advent, who has been an angel sent from God to bring you a message of great joy? Who has helped remove fear from your life? How can you be an angel sent by God to bring a message of great joy for someone else today? When we tell the world the good news of great joy this Christmas, we help push fear out and prepare room for the greatest gift the world has ever known.

The Good News about Jesus is that He comes to all, including the plain and the ordinary. He comes to anyone with a heart humble enough to accept Him. Whoever you are, whatever you do, don't think you need extraordinary qualifications, for Jesus accepts you just as you are. What joy there is in that message!

Prayer: Dear God, In a world where worry, not peace, prevails, stir up that good news again. This Christmas, make it real in our hearts. Never have we needed Your joy and peace more than now. Thank You for the gift of Jesus, our Immanuel, the Word made flesh. Forgive us for forgetting that Your love never changes, never fades, and that You never abandon the purpose for which You came: to save us from our sinful condition, and to give us life eternal, the joy of relationship with a holy God. Your birth and Your death sealed Your promise to us forever. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.