

The Joy of Advent

Intro:

1. What could joy do? The Monatsschloos, a vast palatial edifice which still towers above the city of Salzburg, Austria, was a birthday offering to a fair lady. The giver was the mighty Count of Hohenems, ruler of Salzburg from 1612 to 1619. The recipient was the beautiful Barbara Mabon. The promise made in a moment of tenderness was soon forgotten. When Barbara's birthday was only four weeks away, the count suddenly remembered his pledge. It was not too late. He summoned his subjects and eloquently described his predicament. He called on them to help him. And they did not fail him. Several thousand mighty masons, bricklayers and carpenters went to work to redeem their prince's word. They labored night and day, in relays, without any appreciable rest or pay and completed the stronghold just in time for Barbara's natal anniversary. It is an all-time speed record.
2. ILL: Joy at the Triumphant Entry (Lk 19:37-44).
3. ILL: Joy after the women were told Jesus had risen (Matt 28:1-10).

Luke 2:1-20

I. The Joy of the Shepherds

- A. How did they get their joy?
 1. v9 - They were visited by the angels.
 2. v10-12 - They were given the good news.
 3. This was the fulfilled expectation of over 500 years!
- B. How did it affect them?
 1. v17 - They told everybody they could find!
 2. v20 - They glorified & praised God.

II. Lk 2:25-35 - The Joy of Simeon

- A. How did he get his joy?
 1. v25 - **Consolation** (παράκλησις) = a calling to one's side, encouragement & comfort.
 2. He was waiting for God to act on Israel's behalf during his lifetime.
 3. v26 - God gave him a promise that his dreams would come true in this baby.
- B. How did it affect him?
 1. v28 - Simeon embraced the baby Jesus & praised God.
 2. v34-35 - He blessed the baby & His family.

III. Lk 2:36-38 - The Joy of Anna

- A. How did she get her joy?
 1. v36-37 - She was an 84 year old prophetess who lived in the Temple area.
 2. After she was widowed, she dedicated herself to praising & glorifying God continually.
 3. She may have overheard Simeon's remarks & began praising the Lord for the baby.
- B. How did it affect her?
 1. v38 - She praised the Lord.
 2. She spoke to everyone in the Temple about Him.

IV. Matt 2:1-12 - The Joy of the Magi

A. How did they get their joy?

1. They read God's Word. **Num 24:17 - A star will come out of Jacob; a scepter will rise out of Israel.**
2. They sacrificed their time & treasures.
3. They endangered themselves.
4. They were encouraged by King Herod & his scholars - & were told where to find who they were looking for.
5. **v9** - They discovered the star over Bethlehem!

B. How did it affect them?

1. **v10** - They were overjoyed.
2. **v11** - They worshipped Jesus & gave Him their treasures.

V. Where Do You Get Your Joy?

A. God's will for you is to be joyful & pray.

1. Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! - Phil 4:4.
2. Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. - I Thess 5:16-18.

B. The Lord provides us with the ultimate joy Himself & His love (Jn 15:11).

C. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22).

D. You get joy through fellowship with other Christians & in seeing new people join the ranks.

I Thess 2:19 - For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

E. You get joy when you get answers to your prayers. Jn 16:24 - Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

F. You get joy through suffering.

1. **I Pet 4:13.14 - But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.**
2. **God must be reserving special joy for those of you willing to suffer for Him!**

Do you want special joy this Christmas?

Tell people about the Lord & praise Him like the shepherds did.

Bless others like Simeon.

Be thankful like Anna.

Worship & bring Him your treasures like the Magi.

Then - experience the joy this season they had!