

Advent 2023

Jesus Gives Us Joy

Hebrews 12:1-2 Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12:1-2

12/17/2023

Introduction:

As we begin our study today let's look at the book of Hebrews to better understand the passage. We don't know the author of the book of Hebrews, but we do know that the author was writing to the Jewish people in diaspora or dispersed all around the world. The basic message of the book is this... Jesus is better, Jesus is better than the Angels, Jesus is better than the Law, Jesus is better than the Prophets. As we look at the passage, we will notice that the first word is "Therefore". Someone once said whenever you see the word therefore you need to ask, "what is the therefore, therefore"?

The writer continues with "since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses". This cloud of witnesses that the writer is referring to are all the people mentioned in Chapter 11, which is commonly called the "hall of faith". These were people that endured great hardship and even martyrdom. Ultimately putting their faith in a Messiah which was to come. Having died before Jesus's birth they did not see God's plan fully realized until Jesus fulfilled His mission. The writer then calls us all to set aside all our sins and to run our race with endurance. This is the backdrop and essence of this passage. Let's see how this fits together with our celebration of The Advent.

We must remember that Christmas time is not always the most wonderful time of the year for all people. Some people struggle because of past hurts or even current trials. So, when we sing Joy to the World sometimes, we might think what Joy? I don't feel joyful! Perhaps we need to first define what Joy is? **"Joy is... a lasting emotion that comes from the choice to trust that God will fulfill his promises". – Bible Project.** You see, just like those in the hall of faith we to are waiting for the fulfillment of the promise. As we celebrate the first advent, we look forward to the second advent. During that time however Jesus has not left us empty handed one of the gifts He has given us is Joy.

The Big Idea: Jesus Gives Us Joy

1. My faith is not dependent on my abilities

This is good news friends. I can't speak for all of you, but I know that I struggle with my own self. Scripture calls it a battle with my flesh. In my mind I want to do what is right, but it is so easy to do what is wrong. Paul says in Romans 7:19-24

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

- a. **Jesus is the Founder**
- b. **Jesus is the Perfector**

2. **My sin debt is paid in full**

Have you ever paid something off like a car, or a house, or a credit card? There is a satisfaction and a liberation... a joy if you will that comes with that debt being paid in full. Paul Writes, *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.* Colossians 2:13-14

- a. **Jesus Endured the Cross**
- b. **Jesus Endured the Shame**

3. **Jesus is in charge of all things**

This is perhaps the greatest gift that we have been given during our lifetime. Jesus is in charge of all circumstances. Paul again writes *“that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.”* Ephesians 1:20-23

- a. **Jesus is ruler in our Victories**
- b. **Jesus is ruler in our Failures**

Conclusion:

Christmas time is a wonderful time of year. The whole world Christian and Non-Christian view life through a lens of generosity. For those that do not follow Jesus their hope is in humanity that it can somehow pull itself up and right the ship. We know that is not possible. We, those that follow Jesus, walk through this season with Joy trusting that God will fulfill His promise, that it is in Christ Jesus that all things will be made new.