

Advent 2022

The Good News We Cannot but Tell!

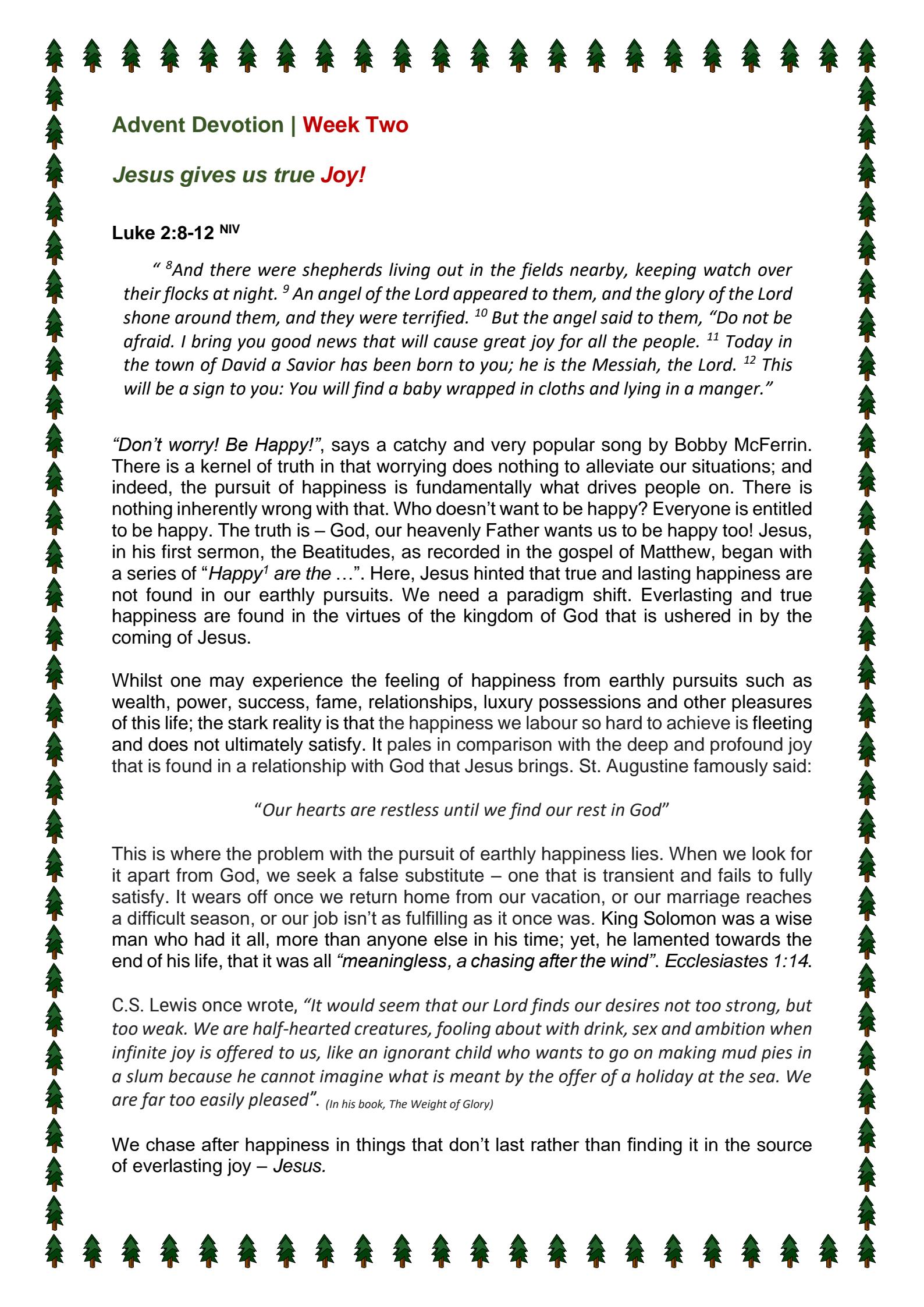


Devotional Booklet

Week Two - Joy



St. Hilda's Church



Advent Devotion | Week Two

Jesus gives us true Joy!

Luke 2:8-12 NIV

“⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

“Don’t worry! Be Happy!”, says a catchy and very popular song by Bobby McFerrin. There is a kernel of truth in that worrying does nothing to alleviate our situations; and indeed, the pursuit of happiness is fundamentally what drives people on. There is nothing inherently wrong with that. Who doesn’t want to be happy? Everyone is entitled to be happy. The truth is – God, our heavenly Father wants us to be happy too! Jesus, in his first sermon, the Beatitudes, as recorded in the gospel of Matthew, began with a series of “Happy¹ are the ...”. Here, Jesus hinted that true and lasting happiness are not found in our earthly pursuits. We need a paradigm shift. Everlasting and true happiness are found in the virtues of the kingdom of God that is ushered in by the coming of Jesus.

Whilst one may experience the feeling of happiness from earthly pursuits such as wealth, power, success, fame, relationships, luxury possessions and other pleasures of this life; the stark reality is that the happiness we labour so hard to achieve is fleeting and does not ultimately satisfy. It pales in comparison with the deep and profound joy that is found in a relationship with God that Jesus brings. St. Augustine famously said:

“Our hearts are restless until we find our rest in God”

This is where the problem with the pursuit of earthly happiness lies. When we look for it apart from God, we seek a false substitute – one that is transient and fails to fully satisfy. It wears off once we return home from our vacation, or our marriage reaches a difficult season, or our job isn’t as fulfilling as it once was. King Solomon was a wise man who had it all, more than anyone else in his time; yet, he lamented towards the end of his life, that it was all “*meaningless, a chasing after the wind*”. Ecclesiastes 1:14.

C.S. Lewis once wrote, “*It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink, sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased*”. (*In his book, The Weight of Glory*)

We chase after happiness in things that don’t last rather than finding it in the source of everlasting joy – Jesus.

The angel said to the shepherds:

"¹⁰Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord."
Luke 2:10-11.

The birth of Jesus, the Messiah (Saviour), "*will cause great joy for all people*", because much more than just the fleeting upbeat feeling of happiness, Jesus divinely gives true joy that accompanies salvation. We cannot generate this joy ourselves — it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in us (Galatians 5:22). It is a joy that flows from within that cannot be extinguished regardless of our circumstances or the challenges that we face in this side of eternity.

Let us upgrade from our '*earthly happiness*' to the '*divine joy*' that is found in Jesus.

Indeed, *Joy to the world, the Lord, Jesus, is come!* This is the good news that we all must share!

Ps Steven

¹Greek μακάριος (*makarios*) is an adjective often translated in the English bible as 'Blessed' or 'Happy', that describes a person as experiencing positive circumstances or a happy disposition.

Reflection

Are you in spiritual danger?

One key sign of spiritual danger is losing your joy.

For further reflection:

Read Jim Johnston's *Joyless Christianity is Dangerous* (DESIRING GOD).
[Scan QR Code or click on this [Link](#).]



Listen deeply and respond humbly in prayer.

Prayer

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." Psalm 51:10-12





Christmas Song

Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come
Let Earth receive her King
Let every heart prepare Him room
And Heaven and nature sing
And Heaven and nature sing
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing



Joy to the Earth, the Saviour reigns
Let all their songs employ
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat the sounding joy
Repeat, repeat, the sounding joy

He rules the world with truth and grace
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness
And wonders of His love
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders, of His love



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