

Good News - Great Joy!

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[0 : 00] Good news. Great joy, the angels said to the shepherds.

! I was looking at various bits and pieces while preparing for this, and some pictures came up of angels. I'm not sure what angels look like, but apparently they look like people who do that wearing big 90s.

But these shepherds were sitting on a hillside looking after their sheep, and these angels turned up and said, Good news! Great joy!

I spent some time also looking at newspaper headlines to see whether newspapers were full of good news and great joy.

I looked at some British newspapers, I looked at some American newspapers, I looked at some Australian newspapers, and I looked at some New Zealand newspapers.

[1 : 08] That doesn't cover where you're from, sorry. I'm from Wales, I didn't look at any Welsh newspapers. None of them had good news on their front page.

Some of them had bad news, some of them had sad news, and some of them had inexplicable stuff that I didn't really understand about dancing.

You see, we're not very good at good news. Families have good news.

Individuals have good news. But switch on the television tonight to watch the news, and you won't have good news. But here's the angel saying, hey, you need to know something which is good.

You need to know something which will bring you great joy. A baby's been born. Well, that always is a matter for great joy.

[2 : 21] And they said, well, we best go have a look at what's going on. The Christmas story absolutely is one of good news.

Some of the best news that you and I will ever have heard. Because it's news which changes our lives.

Individually, your life and my life. But also, the lives of communities. Now, Christmas is a time of great fun, isn't it?

It's the great fun of sitting, wrapping in terminal numbers of presents. For people that you've never met. And driving around delivering them.

It's a time for nice food. It's a time for fun and parties and games and singing. It's a time for presents. And all of that is really, really good.

[3 : 36] All of that is good. But Christmas is and has to be much more than that. Christmas isn't just some sort of massive party.

It's celebrating what the shepherds heard. The wonderful announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The birth of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the world. And you see, we can't separate all the fun and the presents from this wonderful news.

This wonderful thing that has happened. Which we celebrate each year. But for those of us who know Jesus, we celebrate each day.

Because he is the person who has changed our lives. And you see, that idea of changing lives is something which we really mustn't lose sight of.

[4 : 46] All of us here will have had challenges during 2025. Some big, some small, some important, some less important.

But Jesus is the constant. And the one that changes lives.

We live in a troubled world. We live in a world where people behave terribly badly. Wickedly. And we've seen some stuff over the last month.

Where people have behaved terribly badly. Wickedly. So that was the case when the shepherds were around.

It was no different. It was just there wasn't the media to tell everybody. But the angels didn't come and say, Right, shepherds, now listen, go and tell everybody.

[5 : 47] That they're doing it wrong. And I'm going to come and shout at them. It wasn't a message of judgment. Of wrath.

Of anger. It was a judgment of love. An announcement of love. An announcement of hope. Good news.

Great joy. Because God loves us. He sent Jesus. And because Jesus was obedient to his father.

He came to save the world. The other thing about the message, The good news, great joy message, Is that it's not just for a few people.

Shepherds were not the posh lot. Shepherds lived on a hillside. Shepherds lived with their sheep. Might talk about a stinky stable earlier.

[6 : 57] Shepherds weren't sort of terribly clean. Or terribly washed. Or terribly posh.

Or frankly, terribly welcome. But the message was given to them first. And one of the things that we have, That's a risk about the Christmas message, And the good news, great joy message, Is that there will be people sitting, Thinking, yeah, it sounds very nice, Andy.

But it's not for me. It's not for me because, I've done this, Or I've been that, Or I think this. And we need to avoid that.

Because the truth of the matter is, There's 140 something people, In this building. And the good news, Great joy message, Is for each of us.

For you, As you sit, Or you stand, Or you whatever. Whatever your, Situation and circumstance, The good news, Great joy message, Is for you.

[8 : 21] Christmas joy, Is for everyone. It offers, Salvation, Whoever you are. The Bible tells us, That for the grace of God, Has appeared, That offers salvation, To all people.

So please don't sit, And sing some nice songs, And have a piece of Deirdre's cake, Which is featuring heavily, In this evening's service. It better be good, Deirdre.

Please don't sit, And then go home, And think, No, It's not for me. That doesn't, It's not relevant for me. It really, Really is.

The second thing, Which is important, Is that it overcomes fear. We live in a world, Which can be quite scary.

We live in a society, Which can be quite scary. There are things, In our lives, Which might be quite scary. And yet, The truth, Of the good news, Great joy, Of Jesus, Is that he can, Be with you, In your scary moments, In your fear, In your anxiety, And not just be with you, But he can comfort you.

[9 : 52] There's a verse, That some of you, Might have heard, From the gospel of Matthew, Come to me, All you, Who are weary, And burdened, And I will give you rest.

In my work, In the last few weeks, I've met, Lots of people, Who have been really, Really, Tired. Gets like this, At the end of term, For those of you, Who do school terms, It gets like that, At the end of a year, For those who do years, If you don't do years, Can you let me know, What you do do?

It's a bit dark, It's a bit cold, A bit rainy, Even living in Whitby, It can get a bit damp, Sometimes, Can't it? And we, Find ourselves, Burdened, And weary, And what Jesus is saying, To you today, Quite straightforwardly, In this building, At this time, Come to me, If you're weary, If you're burdened, And I, Will give you, Rest.

And that's why we share, The good news, Great joy, Because not to do so, Would be really unkind, It's so good, We want you to know it, I want you to know it, I want us all to know, The good news, Great joy, Story, Of Christmas, Somebody wrote this, In a troubled world, Still yearning for hope, Peace and meaning, The Christmas message, Remains timeless, Jesus Christ, Is God's answer, To human despair, And his birth, Continues to announce joy, That transforms lives, Restores hope, And brings, Eternal, Eternal, Salvation, I have an invitation,

To each of you, As you lay down, To sleep tonight, Allow four words, To go through your head, Good news, Great joy, And ask Jesus, To show you that, This Christmas time, Amen.

[12 : 36] Thank you,