

The Joy of Being Remembered: Luke 1, Matthew 2 | Dave Geldart | 2022-12-11

1) Welcome (title slide)

- a) Advent – only 2 more weeks till Christmas!
- b) Hope, Peace, Now—Joy
- c) Today we're going to talk about the connection between joy and remembering.

2) Intro

- a) It really feels good to be remembered.
 - i) **FB bday posts** - remembered
 - ii) **Or when you've been sick** or had a tough medical procedure, or a test, and someone checks in on you. Follows us about a prayer request you shared... and says they've been praying. Maybe they bring over some fun beverages or meals. Maybe from your small group.
 - iii) That's pretty great. It's really GOOD to be remembered.
- b) **I remember waiting for what felt like forever** in elementary school for (I think it was my dad) to pick me up after school. Standing outside. Waiting. Before cell phones. Wondering if I'd been forgotten. That panicky sad feeling, as the minutes drag on and on.
 - i) And then, that THRILL OF HOPE – the rejoicing – when I finally saw his car turn into the school drive. I was going to be OK. I'd not been forgotten!
- c) **There's tons of war and other stories throughout history** about people and soldiers stuck for long periods of time behind enemy lines, unsure if help was even coming.....waiting until all hope seemed lost..... and the overwhelming joy they'd feel when rescue finally arrived.
 - i) **There is great joy in not being forgotten. In remembering and Being remembered.**
- d) That's one of the reasons **Dementia & Alzheimer's** are so difficult. The loneliness and despair of forgetting and being forgotten.
- e) It reminds me of **the famous Carl Sagan quote** from last Sunday: **"Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves."**
 - i) **Waiting makes us forgetful.** Makes assume the worst. We're all alone. Nobody cares. No help is coming.

3) How about you?

- a) **When have you experienced this:** feeling forgotten and then being remembered? Perhaps by a friend or family member. Someone at work. Maybe by God?
- b) When's a recent time you've **felt forgotten by God?**
- c) **Maybe you're still there....** And haven't yet felt like he's remembered you, or moved toward you. Maybe God feels distant. Detached. Unconnected. Uncaring. Silent.

4) As we turn from the Old Testament to the New, from Malachi to Matthew, the people Israel felt forgotten. Waiting so long with no word.

5) Backdrop: **The 400 yrs of silence since a major prophetic word** through a prophet in their midst.

- a) Since the last Prophecies about the messiah to come & save.

- b) **Waiting even a few minutes in the drivethrough** can feel like forever.
- c) And when our **amazon package** is delayed by a few days, all hope can seem lost.
- d) **But 400 years** is a very LONG TIME
 - i) **Our country** has only existed for a little over half of that. Go back to George Washington. And you're only halfway there.
 - (1) The primitive telescope had just been invented
 - (2) And The pope ordered all martin Luther bibles to be burned.
 - (3) **400 yrs ago the pilgrims set sail** from England on the Mayflower

6) 400 years of waiting. That's **16 generations! 6 Full lifetimes** in a row. And things getting worse.

The groaning of oppression under near constant foreign rule

- i) From the Persians to the Greeks, to the Selucids – the worst **King Antiochus IV** who outright outlawed the Jewish religion, killed off the priestly line, and desecrated the temple by sacrificing a pig in the holy of holies.
 - (1) AND GOD DID NOTHING
- ii) Then when **Rome came through in 63BC** and clamped everything down under Caesar, put the hated Herod as king over Israel, and taxed them heavily, hope was at an all time low.
- iii) **God was supposed to be their KING.** Come and save them. But their king was gone. And they wondered very seriously if he was ever coming back.
- iv) **And for generation after generation**, as the decades and the centuries slipped by, memory grew dim. **Hope faded.** And life went on.

7) It's into this 400 years of oppression and silence that we starts out in **Luke 1:5 with Zechariah**, an old priest, He and his aged wife Elizabeth have **never been able to have a child**, and Zech is serving in the temple, and an angel appears to him.

- a) Surprises him something fierce! – Even though Zech was in God's temple, **he wasn't really expecting to hear from God.**
- b) Angel Gabriel says Zacheriah, **God has remembered you** - is going to answer your prayer for a child!!! Your old lady's going to have a baby.
- c) Then he says, there's more ... remember the last thing God said, 400 yrs ago?

i) Malachi ends with: "4 Remember ... ⁵ "See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ⁶ He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents"

ii) Angel says, You're to name him John, "¹⁷ And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

iii) God says, I haven't forgotten you or your people. I'M GOING TO KEEP MY PROMISES!

8) BUT This old and righteous priest -- after a lifetime of waiting – totally muffs it and disbelieves God! Doubts pretty hard. Then his consequence is silence until God did it anyways.

- 9) Next, starting in Luke 1:26, about 6 months later, **SAME Angel appears to Mary** – not a holy priest with good social status – but a **simple young teen peasant who was still a virgin**.
- a) But when Gabriel tells her SHE'S GOING to have a miraculous baby, who will be the promised messiah – she believes God.
 - b) And beats the nice old guy in the priestly robe! This little girl passes the test where Zech had failed.
 - i) F&F: Messiah come as a baby – Is 9:6
 - (1) For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 - ii) F&F Mother would be a virgin (Is 7:14) → fulfilled in mat 1:21-23 (700 yrs before)
 - (1) Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign:
The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.
- 10) Right away, **Starting in v39, Mary rushes out to visit and stay with her cousin Elizabeth** and Zacheriah for a while. And when Mary knocks on the door --- baby JTB leaps for joy in Elizabeth's womb, and **both Mary and Elizabeth are filled with the Spirit of God Almighty and rejoice LOUDLY together about how God had REMEMBERED and would fulfill his promises!**
- a) And specifically that God blesses those who believe he will fulfill his promises.
 - i) "BLESSED IS SHE WHO HAS BELIEVED THAT THE LORD WOULD FULFILL HIS PROMISES TO HER" – luke 1:45
 - ii) Then in v 46-55, Mary sings a **joyous song filled with prophecy – foretold and fulfilled**.
- 11) Then starting in v57, **AND WHEN the Baby John the Baptist WAS BORN**, and Elizabeth and the whole community were overflowing with Joy (amazed that this super old couple is actually having a baby – a women decades past menopause). **Zechariah takes a step of faith** and chooses to believe. **God is the God of 2nd chances**. 200th chances! So patient with his children.
- 12)^{v. 63} He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John."⁶⁴ Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God.⁶⁵ All the neighbors were filled with awe...⁶⁷ ...Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied
- 13) Zechariah started rejoicing not because he could speak again – but **because GOD REMEMBERED HIS PEOPLE AND WOULD fulfill his promises**.
- a) And better late than never, Zechariah follows in Mary's footsteps, bring filled with the Holy Spirit, in vs 67-79, **singing his own song – filled with the joy of prophecy foretold and fulfilled**.
- 14) By the time you get to the birth of Jesus, there are already tons of prophecies being fulfilled all over the place.
- 15) Heres just 4 more brief prophecies fulfilled in JC's birth, in Mat 2
- a) **Tribe of Judah, In Bethlehem in the region of Ephrathah** (that Bethlehem, there were a few)
 - i) Foretold in Micah 5:2-5, 700 yrs before
 - ii) Fulfilled in mat 2:4-6

- b) **There would be a slaughter of Jewish babies** connected to the Messiah's birth:
- (1) Jeremiah 31:15 (600 years before Christ)
 - (2) Fulfilled Mat 2:17-18 (as Herod kills the baby boys 2yrs and down)

c) **He would come OUT OF EGYPT**

- (1) Hosea 11:1 (750 years before Christ)
- (2) Fulfilled Mat 2:14-15 as M&J are warned in a dream to escape to Egypt

d) **He would be called a Nazarene**

- (1) Isaiah 11:1-5, 55:3 (700 yrs BC)
- (2) Fulfilled Mat 2:23 when they head back warned in a dream not to head home because Herod's son was reigning, so they slipped north to a backwater nowhere town named Nazareth, where Jesus grew up.

16) There are tons and tons more – more than 100 in fact!

17) The Bible stands utterly alone, unique, against all other ancient and religious texts. In its overwhelming reliability historically (manuscript evidence, etc) and its verifiable predictive and fulfilled prophecies.

- a) **In fact it's predictive prophecy specifically that's God's chosen method** of self-authentication of his word!
 - i) Is 42:8-9, also is 44-45
- b) And it's **fulfilled prophecy specifically that objectively anchors my faith**, through all my pain, and fears, and doubts (which can be quite severe at times).
- c) For me, specifically some predictive prophecies in **Daniel 7-9**, written 600 yrs (even the most liberal skeptical scholars put it at least 200 years before Christ).
 - i) **Daniel 9 predict the exact year**, and likely the exact day, when the Messiah would come and be revealed.
 - (1) Ends up pointing to the 33AD in Nisan, the spring -- exact year Jesus entered Jerusalem, was heralded king, was Crucified and Rose again. – written hundreds of years beforehand.
 - (2) I'll link to a vlog Deaver and I did years ago about this if you're interested.
 - ii) **When I'm ready to throw in the towel**, Ready for the rope to snap, it's a small handful of prophetic promises that hold fast and hold me.
 - iii) **I can't get around them.**
 - iv) Prophetic prophecy can serve as a strong anchor for our faith and joy in Jesus, especially when life is hard.

18) Application:

19) **If God remembered and fulfilled his promises about these prophecies about the messiah, we can be confident he'll remember you and fulfill all his promises to you. And this leads to joy.**

20) **2 Cor 1:20 – all God's promises are fulfilled and YESed in JC**

- a) ²⁰ **For no matter how many promises God has made, they are “Yes” in Christ. And so through him the “Amen” is spoken by us to the glory of God.**
- b) An incredible truth.
- c) Some he has already fulfilled for us.
- d) Some are partially fulfilled
- e) Some will be fulfilled when he returns to finally and completely rescue us and make all things right.
- f) **And we are called to build our confidence, and our JOY on his promises.**

21) We need to know what those promises are from the Bible

22) Promises God makes about you from his Word: GET YOUR HANDOUT/BOOKMARK

- a) 1. I am **not forgotten**. 1 Peter 1:2
- b) 2. **Jesus will return** for me. Luke 12:40
- c) 3. I am **secure**. John 10:28-29
- d) 4. God has **joy for me** to experience. John 15:9-11
- e) 5. **My prayers are heard** and important to God. Matthew 7:7
- f) 6. God will **work all things out** for my good. Romans 8:28
- g) 7. God will **always be with me**. Hebrews 13:5
- h) 8. God will always **give me a way out** of temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13
- i) 9. God will give me his **wisdom** when I ask. James 1:5
- j) 10. I am fully **forgiven**. Colossians 2:13-14 All your **sins are removed** (1 John 1:9)
- k) 11. I am **free** from condemnation. Romans 8:1
- l) 12. I am fully **accepted** by God. Ephesians 1:6
- m) 13. I have **full access** to God. Ephesians 2:18
- n) 14. God is my loving **Father**. 2 Corinthians 6:18
- o) 15. I am God's **adopted child**. Romans 8:15
- p) 16. **God loves me**. Ephesians 2:4-5
- q) 17. Jesus is my **big brother**. Hebrews 2:11-12
- r) 18. I'm a **co-heir with Jesus** of God's kingdom. Romans 8:17
- s) 19. **I will reign** with Jesus. 2 Timothy 2:12
- t) 20. I have **eternal life**. John 3:16
- u) 21. I will be **resurrected physically from the dead**. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17
 - i) THE GREATEST OF ALL HOPES!
- v) 22. I'll live on the **New Earth**. Revelation 21:1
- w) 23. God Himself will **live with us**. Revelation 21:3
- x) 24. I'll see God **face to face**. Revelation 22:3
- y) 25. God will **make all things new** and right. Revelation 21:5
- z) 26. Pain, sorrow, and **death will eventually be removed** forever. Revelation 21:4
- aa) 27. God will **wipe away my tears**. Revelation 21:4
 - (1) None forgotten. None wasted.

(2) ALL REDEEMED!

- bb)28. I am a **new creation**. 2 Corinthians 5:17
- cc) 29. My **life has profound purpose** and meaning. Ephesians 2:10
- dd)30. **God will finish the good work He's begun in me**. Philippians 1:6

23) Words to build a life on. The building materials of confidence and joy.

24) Anxiety and Depression today – war against joy

- a) The older I get the more I'm recognizing my tendencies toward **bouts of anxiety and depression**.
- b) I have a default need to **keep things under control**. Put together. Keep me and others safe by thinking everything through. Do the right things.
 - i) Avoid failure. **Avoid being SEEN to fail**
- c) I can get **triggered by situations** outside my control (many things) and by **comments** from ppl who criticize me.
- d) I can get pretty hard on myself.
- e) **That's kinda where I've been lately**, a season of anxiety and depression.
- f) **I had a great conversation with an old friend this week**. And as we talked about where we've been lately, and both of us reflecting on the **realities of struggle in our lives**. Happiness comes and goes. And how **Maturity, growth, seems to be less in decreasing the reality of pain** and struggle (even being triggered and experiencing anxiety and depression), but in **being able to more quickly identify what's going on**, know ourselves, and know how to take healthy steps **toward God and others**.
- g) To fight for and live from a deep seated hope and trust in God.

25) **We should pursue health** and healing, peace and happiness. These are good things.

- a) Here at our church, we highly value **holistic health**.
- b) And we strongly encourage people to take healthy steps. Lean in to **counseling and therapy**. Medication where prescribed. Let others walk with you through the process.

26) But through it all, even when we're low and life is hard, **we are not stuck**, joy is not out of reach, even if it seems so.

27) Because Joy and Happiness are related, but different.

28) **Happiness is a pleasant feeling**. A lighting or lifting of the heart. The smile. The laughing. The enjoyment. A sense that all is right and good and fun.

29) **JOY is deeper. It is actually not dependent on our circumstances** or feelings. We can be in pain, mourn, be depressed, and still fight for and experience joy. **Biblical joy comes from a deep sense, a trust, that you're seen and known and loved by God**. And that he is with you in your struggles. And will make all things work together for our good. Some how, all eventually when he returns and makes all things new.

a) GOD IS GOOD AND THE STORY ENDS WELL.

30) **Jesus himself, our suffering messiah, was well acquainted with grief**, and experienced all the weariness and sorrows we do. He was **overwhelmed with anxiety in the Garden** as he anticipated

the cross. **BUT FOR THE JOY SET BEFORE HIM**, he endured. Entrusting himself to his Father. And even when he felt forgotten by him on the cross, he endured. **And God didn't forget.** He raised him to life on the 3rd day. And set him above all things. **HE HIMSELF is our leader, our model** for living in the tension of the here and now, and the yet to come.

a) Rom 8: ³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ... ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

i) **The Promised one – Our savior -- Foretold and Fulfilled**

31) REFLECT REMEMBER RESPOND:

32) **REFLECT:** This morning, where are you tired, grieving, angry, lonely, hopeless? Where do you feel (or fear to be) forgotten by God? Missed. Left. (pause)

33) **REMEMBER:** What promise do you need to hear afresh this morning from him?

- a) **If you've not yet chosen to trust your life to Jesus**, these promises **don't apply to you. But they can!** If you'd like to claim these promises for your own, simply tell God you want join his family by placing your trust in Jesus, rather than yourself. Ask him to forgive your sins and adopt you as his child.
- b) **If you do, God's word promises that he acts immediately.** His Holy Spirit comes and lives within you. And will never leave. I'd strongly encourage you to tell someone – whoever brought you, or come talk to me or another of our pastors. We'd love to help you get connected in community and learn to grow in your relationship with Jesus.

34) **Again, for those who have entrusted your lives to Jesus:**

a) **REMEMBER the promises of God.** And **build a stronghold of Joy from the building blocks** of God's promises.

i) **Write 1 down this week.**

ii) **And put on your mirror.** Your speedometer. In a ziplock in your shower. Tape to your monitor at work.

35) **RESPOND:** Memorize them along with a verse for each. So you can **recite and meditate** on them when you're tempted to feel abandoned by God.

- i) Meditate on them day and night. Like the eucharist, **take the word of God into you. Make his promises a part of you.** Feed on them as your daily bread. The breath of life giving you your next moments. And see what God does. See what Grows from within you, overflowing to joy and life that's more than enough for you, even when you're low and weak.

36) That overflows into your world and your relationships.

37) **So that when you're pricked, the promises of God come out.**

38) **The unique vintage wine of your life, fermented into joy** because of God's promises.

- a) Joy that's strong. That holds you together
- b) Even when you're weeping as your world seems to fall apart.

39) HE IS THERE. In the silence. In the waiting. Inviting you to remember his words. His promises. See how he's already made Good thus far. **And choose to fight for the joy** that comes from a firm hope that God is Good. He is good toward me. **And he WILL DO what he's promised.**

THE CHOPPING BLOCK:

Genealogy of Jesus and the Curse of Jeconiah

- 40) Descendant of David but Not Jeconiah! – this one gets technical, but I think it’s amazing
- a) King Messiah had to come via a certain family, known from antiquity. And he had to do it in a very very specific way.
 - b) Apart from legal issues, there is important authenticating value here
 - c) Blood descendant of David will reign forever through the kingly line: Jerem 23:5-6, 2 sam 7:12-13
 - d) Blood CURSE OF JECONIAH
 - i) Jer 22:30 – no blood descendant of Jeconiah will ever reign as king
 - e) There’s a real problem.
 - i) Messiah must be a blood descendant of David yet can’t be a blood descendant of Jeconiah.
 - ii) AND must be through the Kingly line of David (through Jeconiah)
 - iii) Many Jewish scholars puzzled over this for centuries, unsure how this could ever be reconciled.
 - f) But Matthew 1 (as Josh taught on a couple wks ago) follows the lineage of Joseph by blood back to Abraham and explicitly lists JECONIAH.
 - g) In Jewish culture, the legal right to rulership came not specifically through blood, but could also pass through adoption. A father adopting a son works.
 - h) So the blood curse prevented the Messiah from being related to Jeconiah by blood. But Joseph was Jesus’ ADOPTIVE father, not by blood.
 - i) The Genealogy in Luke can be confusing to the casual reader, because it is also the genealogy for Joseph. But it was actually the genealogy of Mary (by blood). Sparing you the details (ask me if you’re interested), we know back from the Book of Numbers that a father could pass on property and family name if he had only daughters and no sons, to one of his daughter’s husbands for inheritance purposes.. Special type of adoption.
 - j) In Luke, Heli is listed as the father of Joseph, though he was actually Mary’s father. Confirmed in the Jewish Talmud.
 - i) Mary was Jesus’ only blood parent, and her genealogy traces back to the royal line of kings descended from King David!
 - (1) But she was not a descendant of Solomon (the 1st born son, kingly line – through which Jeconiah came), but through Nathan, David’s second son.
 - (2) So the only way for the Messiah to fulfill all the prophecies, including the blood curse on Jeconiah and his descendants, was for Jesus to come from a virgin birth.
 - (3) Through Mary Having the blood right to David’s throne by being a descendant of him, but not through Jeconiah – pure and w/o curse
 - (4) Yet still having the legal right to the throne through Joseph to the kingly succession through Solomon and Jeconiah, not through blood lineage, but through adoption.
 - (5) INSAINE – the chances of that happening are infinitesimally small.
 - (6) And Jesus would have absolutely no agency in the matter (as if, as some allege ignorantly, that Jesus simply knew the prophecies about the Messiah and set out to fulfill them himself).
 - k) Where the Jewish scholars of the day saw NO WAY for the messiah to fulfill all these prophecies, God Remembered, and found a way where there seemed no way.
 - i) This is the GOSPEL yall! – the GOOD NEWS that God has made a way back to him and to eternal and good life through Jesus Christ and his work for us on the Cross.

* Daniel 9 Prophecy: vlog by Geldart and Deaver:

https://vimeo.com/manage/videos/331443982?embedded=true&source=video_title&owner=806551