

Christmas sermon 2016

Titus 2:11-14

For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.

OUTLINE

Joy – what joy?

1. – a great offer
2. – a good life
3. – an amazing hope

- Our Christmas theme year is 'joy to the world'
- And I can see there's a **lot** of joy here today!
- Joy because Christmas is finally **here**
- Joy because the **shopping** is over!
- Joy because **family and friends** have arrived – or because **you've arrived** to visit family and friends
- Joy of the anticipation of what **tomorrow/today** will bring
- Joy because of the **presents**
- And the **food**
- And that special **wine** you've been saving up
- Joy because of a **break** from work
- Joy of precious **family time**...
- That's a **LOT** of joy!!
- And yet if we take a step back from what's happening over these few days, we might have a few questions...
- Has God **delivered** what was **promised**?
- **What** did we read in the Luke reading?
- The angel announced to the shepherds *I bring you good news that will cause great **joy for all the people**...*
- And yet we look up from ourselves... and we take a look around the world... and we wonder – well – what happened **there**?
- **Syria – Aleppo; Berlin** just this week...
- We **know** that not all is right with the world...
- And in our **own families** and **lives** and **hearts** – there are many **stresses** and **anxieties** and **sadnesses**.... //
- So let's explore a little... **what is this joy** that was announced when Jesus was born...?
- It's got to be more than the fact that a little boy was born...

- **Plenty** of children are born every year – and yes – they bring great joy – but there’s no bright light in the middle of the night with angels singing the praises of the baby born!
- What was it about **this** boy?
- Three things I want to show you from the passage from **Titus** that was read for us...
- Joy – firstly, because there’s a

1. GREAT OFFER

- How did the passage start?
- *For "the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people.*
- When he says “the grace of God has appeared....” He’s saying that the **grace** of God appeared when **Jesus** appeared!
- And he came with an offer... a **great** – a **gracious** offer.... – that is - something we **don’t deserve...**
the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people..
- Now the shops have been full of **great Christmas** offers... I’m sure you have **scored** a few bargains this **year**.... !
- ...but the best Christmas offer you’ll **ever** get is **salvation**...
- Salvation is **God’s great rescue plan** for **humanity**...
- ...**rescue** from the **disaster** we **created** by **cutting** him out of our **lives**...
- His **offer** of salvation includes
 - taking the **penalty** for **rejecting** him – which he did by his death on the cross...
 - **forgiveness** for doing our own **thing**
 - **reconciliation** with **him**
 (but wait there’s more)
 - **eternal life** with **him**
- **You won’t see a better Christmas offer...!!**
- There’s reason for **great joy** right **there!!**
- But there’s more...!
- For we are promised a

2. THE GOOD LIFE

- Back to our passage...
- If we take up the great offer of salvation... then we are **inspired** and **empowered** to live **the good life**...
- Have a look with me - for the offer of salvation *teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age*
- Now I don’t know how many are scientists or mathematicians among us... but here’s a formula I want to share with you...
- **GL** ≠ **S**
- But
- **S** > **GL**
- I know what you’re thinking – hang on – this is a bit much for Christmas Eve/Christmas Day...
- Let me explain

- Most people think that if they live a good life... pick up their moral socks... turn over a new leaf... do good things... then – at the end – you’re in! You get to spend eternity with God!
- But the Bible says living a good life will **never** lead to salvation... because you can never be good **enough** and you can’t make up for **bad** stuff in the past ///
- But – salvation will always lead to a good life
- So – here’s what happens...
- When you take up God’s offer of salvation – by saying ‘sorry’
 - he takes the **penalty**
 - you’re **forgiven**
 - you’re **reconciled to God**
- ... And then he **changes** your **life**.
- **Seriously** and **wonderfully** changes your life.... //
- **BLANK SLIDE**
- Once you’ve come into relationship with God – you’ll start living a good life... not because you’re **scared** he’s out to **get** you if you **don’t**... but because you **love** him... and you **get** that he **loves** you – and you find yourself
 - not being so **selfish**
 - **thinking** of **others**
 - becoming **generous**
 - making **sacrifices**
 - seeing where you can make a **difference**...
 ...because you know that is **exactly** how God has **dealt** with **you**!!
- Having received his **grace**... his **kindness**... his **generosity**... his **forgiveness**... you’ll long to **become** a person of **grace** and **kindness**, **generosity** and **forgiveness**...
- Don’t fall for the mistake that many make in thinking that Christianity is all about **nice morals** and **good ethics**... about trying hard to be **good**...
- Rather – it’s about the **opposite**...
- Realising and admitting you’ve **mucked it up** and that you can’t **live** that life by your **own feeble efforts**.... //
- ... and then by **receiving** God’s offer and coming into **relationship** with him... you’re **transformed** from **within** to **live** the **new life**...
- **Joy** > **what joy**?
- Joy because of a great **offer**
- Joy because of **the good life** you’ll start to live
- And finally
- Joy because of

3. AN AMAZING HOPE

- There are two appearances in this passage
- The **first** appearing – is when Jesus first entered our world as one of us... to offer us salvation and a new life
- The second appearing... speaks of **Jesus’** return....

- This is what the reading says.... *we wait for the blessed hope – the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ...*
- The Bible promises that when Jesus appears a **second** time... all that's **wrong** with this world will be put **right**...
- ...and that in the **new creation**... no more **tears**... no more **pain**, no more **sickness**... no more **evil**... no more **death**... //
- That is our **sure** and **certain** and **amazing hope**...
- ...answers to all the **world's** present problems... all of **life's** present **challenges**... ///
- There's a deep and lasting joy in that...
- [Black]

- **“Good news of great joy”**, proclaimed the **angels** to the **shepherds**....
- **‘What joy?’** we ask when we look around the world.
- And the answer is... the joy of
- a very **great offer** – forgiveness, reconciliation – salvation
- the joy of the **good life** – once we come into relationship with God – he transforms us into his people – to live good, godly, upright lives
- and the joy of our **amazing hope** for the **future**... in a world where everything is put right.
- **Joy to the world?**
- **ABSOLUTELY!**
- May **that** joy be yours this Christmas as you
- **Take up the offer**
- **Live the good life**
- **Cling to your future hope**