Emmanuel **– wk 3: Mega Joy!**

**What's Your fav Christmas Song? 1-2-3! Who picked 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**

**As a kid – the Toys we thought would bring everlasting joy!**

**50’s toys / 60’s toys / 70’s toys / 80’s toys / 90’s toys / 00’s toys**

**Every year diff must have toys. Life is filled with things we think we need to make us happy - but no matter what we get we are rarely happy for long… we still want more.**

**Few are happy and fewer have joy...**

**Philippians 4:4 Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again—rejoice!**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16 - Rejoice always... Is that really possible??**

**One of the missing things in Christmas and in the world today, JOY**

**We sing - “Joy to the world the Lord the lord has come” “O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant” “repeat the sounding joy” “Tis the season to be jolly” - But for many Christmas isn’t so holly jolly.**

**Today - how to have joy in every season of life - no matter what you're going through.**

**I love to laugh and listen to people laugh- but sometimes life is not fun.**

**Ecclesiastes 3:1,4 “There is a time for everything and a season for every activity under heaven… there is a time to laugh.” (But the writer of Ecc didn’t always feel this way) (Ecclesiastes 2:17) “So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.” – What a downer…**

**Life is not so Merry and Bright for many when…**

* **When - Life seems useless -**

**Ecc 1:2-4 “Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” 3 What do people gain from all their labors at which they toil under the sun? 4 Generations come and generations go, but the earth remains forever. (Life never changes – the world stays the same)**

* **When - Life seems tiresome**

**Ecc 1:5 The sun rises and the sun sets, and hurries back to where it rises. 6 The wind blows to the south and turns to the north; round and round it goes, ever returning on its course. 7 All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again. 8 All things are wearisome, more than one can say. The eye never has enough of seeing, nor the ear its fill of hearing.**

* **When - Life seems unfulfilling**

**Ecc 1:9 What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun. 10 Is there anything of which one can say, “Look! This is something new”? It was here already, long ago; it was here before our time. (No matter how much we do, we're never satisfied; no matter how much we hear, we're not content. History merely repeats itself.)**

* **When - Life seems uncontrollable**

**Ecc 1:14 I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 15 What is crooked cannot be straightened; what is lacking cannot be counted.**

**He goes on to say we work and save only for it to be wasted by those who live after us – we learn and gain knowledge only to forget it as we age and die and remembered no more.**

**Merry Christmas - life can be a downer… that’s why Christmas is so important – When Jesus shows up on the scene – Joy follows.**

**This Christmas it is time to get your joy back**

**One of my favorite parts of the Christmas story, the shepherds… just another night at work… then God showed up.**

**Luke 2:8-10 - And there were shepherds (bottom of social ladder, own nothing, cared for others livestock) living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. (pulling an all nightery – sipping coffee to stay awake) 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. I bring you good news (amazing life changing news) of great joy (Greek ‘megas’) that will be for all the people.’” 11 Today in the town of David a Savior (rescuer) has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Messiah, loaded = long awaited anointed one - God in flesh) 12This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." (Deity wore diapers in a food box)**

**13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, (God releases before them the very reality of heaven - the one angel becomes a choir or thousands – the first Christmas party) praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, (The entire OT and history was leading to this moment) and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." 15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." 16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.**

**Why was his birth such mega joy? What was it?**

**Mega Joy – Getting your Joy back**

**Luke 2:9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them… and they were terrified. (What rattles you? - God responds (V.10) – 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy…**

**You need joy? 1. Don’t allow the negatives to rattle you**

**The could have been’s - should have been’s - what if’s – and fears?**

**Moving past fear and negativity**

**- Find the hope of Christ in every situation**

**(Philippians 4:8) “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.”**

**Joy is spiritual war. You want joy – don’t be so negative. Find and look for the hope of God.**

**(2 Corinthians 10:5) “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”**

**- Say something encouraging in every conversation**

**(Proverbs 16:24) “Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.” / (Psalm 141:3) “Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips.”**

**Train our eyes, mind, and attitude to find encouraging qualities - don’t let the negatives shake you.**

**John Wooden – “Things turn out best for the people who make the best of the way things turn out.”**

**Luke 2:10 …the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.’” 11 For today in the town of David… (that is so important!)**

**You need joy? 2. Realize God is in control - of the known and unknown**

**More than just an announcement of a location – it declared a fulfilled prophecy – meaning God is still in control!**

**Nothing about the birth of Jesus was an accident – God was orchestrating His plan– joy in knowing God’s in control!**

**Think about this - In birth pain came Joy, but not without pain**

**13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 14"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."**

**God’s (favor) amazing grace is declared at his birth – it cannot be stopped; it is in motion. For those who have God’s grace – for those who have the Lord’s favor, this is a great joy for you!**

**Joy is knowing God is working in the known and unknown of our life**

**When you realize God is in control - you don’t focus on what you don’t have – you find yourself thankful for what you’ve been given**

**(Ecc 5:19) “When God gives any man wealth and possessions, and enables him to enjoy them, to accept his lot and be happy in his work - this is a gift of God.”**

**Realizing God’s in charge enables you to be thankful for your lot**

**If Christmas (or life) is about people, presents, and possessions - THEN - no wonder we lose our joy when life doesn’t happen just right… You will not always be able to give, get, or have what you want.**

**Families are not perfect – loved ones pass on – sometimes you lose your job – sometimes you run out of gas – Joy does not come in a store – in a package – you can’t get it on sale!**

**Happiness is a result of what happens – Mega Joy is deeper**

**v.15… the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." (They could have said – no I’m cool, I don’t feel like going - but they decided to get up – and go!)**

**You need joy? 3. Take responsibility for your own emotions and move on what you know to do**

**We do not get to choose what people do, but we do get to choose the way we view life and people.**

**So easy to blame others, but the choice is yours to get up and move on what you have been told in the Bible.**

**(Hebrews 12:1) “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.”**

**You cannot determine what happens to you**

**But you can determine what happens in you**

**Luke 2:10,11 - “But the angel said to them, ... I bring good news of great joy that will be for all people. (What is this good news? What is the reason for the Joy? What is the source of the joy?) Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”**

**You need joy - 4. Recognize the source of true joy – Jesus alone.**

**The reason for Christmas is that YOU needed a savior – you need Him, He doesn’t need us. We needed a Savior - A savior for what?**

**Christ did not come 2,000 yrs ago; so that we could give presents, decorate our houses, have parties and sit on Santa’s lap - He was born to save us from sin.**

**To choose the cradle without the cross – is to miss Christmas**

**There is no Christmas without a cross – that’s why he came.**

**To celebrate the child without the Christ is to miss the Joy given**

**If that baby is not the ONE – there is no joy. It’s just presents.**

**Jesus the true and only source of pure and lasting joy!**

**Joyful when he was rejected - joyful when he was abandoned - joyful when he was betrayed - joyful as he hung on a tool of torture, the cross**

**Jesus embodied a stubborn joy - joy that held its ground against pain and hard times**

**Hebrews 12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, (those who have gone before us) let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (the traps, temptations, hate, unforgiveness, habits – throw them off – turn from them and turn to Jesus) 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (he endured the cross with Joy was because he saw you!)**

**Those shepherds were told first – why them?**

**In that culture they were the bottom of the social & economic ladder - the forgotten (belittled in public letters & despised by those in town) marginalized - God chose them to the break the silence of the centuries**

**The least of people - least of towns – the least of these**

**Jesus has come for the least of these – you.**

**You see these SHEPHERDS - were more than just field workers…**

**Because of their proximity to the temple, it’s believed these were shepherds who tended for temple lambs bred for temple sacrifices.**

**They tended, cared for, raised, and loved these lambs**

**It’s powerful thought - that these simple shepherds who looked after the temple lambs were the first to see the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world - they were all too familiar with the great cost of sin**

**They understood the need for a savior - understood the blood that is shed – understood how this was Good New!**

* **They did not let the negatives rattle them**
* **They embraced a God who is in control**
* **They gave their emotions to the giver of peace**
* **They embraced true Joy – Jesus, God with us!**

**Joy is knowing that whatever life brings, Jesus holds my life**

**Joy is knowing that whatever I have done, Jesus paid the price**

**The heavenly host invites us to join with the shepherds in recognizing that the savor has come – to save us and shepherd us!**

**Joy to the world! The Lord is come! Mega joy is here!**