



Rock Point Church
Bill Bush | 12.9.2024

BIG IDEA | The joy of the manger is found in the gift on the cross.

Matthew 28:1-10 (NLT)

¹ Early on Sunday morning, as the new day was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went out to visit the tomb.

² Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. ³ His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. ⁴ The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

⁵ Then the angel spoke to the women. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶ He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead, just as he said would happen. Come, see where his body was lying. ⁷ And now, go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and he is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there. Remember what I have told you.”

⁸ The women ran quickly from the tomb. They were very frightened but also filled with great joy, and they rushed to give the disciples the angel's message. ⁹ And as they went, Jesus met them and greeted them. And they ran to him, grasped his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't be afraid! Go tell my brothers to leave for Galilee, and they will see me there."

Luke 2:8-20 (NLT)

⁸ That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹ The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! ¹² And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

¹⁴ "Glory to God in highest heaven,
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

¹⁵ When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, “Let’s go to Bethlehem! Let’s see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

¹⁶ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. ¹⁷ After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. ¹⁸ All who heard the shepherds’ story were astonished, ¹⁹ but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. ²⁰ The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

How to experience the joy of the manger:

Accept the gift.

John 1:29 (NLT)

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

How to experience the joy of the manger:

Accept the gift.

Live in resurrection hope.

“The cradle without the cross is just a story; the cross without the resurrection is just a tragedy.”

– Max Lucado

How to experience the joy of the manger:

Accept the gift.

Live in resurrection hope.

Go tell it joyfully.

“The first carol was sung by angels, and the last will be sung in heaven, celebrating the Lamb.”

– Charles Spurgeon

GROUPS QUESTIONS:

1. What stood out to you about this week’s sermon?
2. Discuss the Christmas story and what it means to you. How does understanding the connection between Christmas and Easter deepen your appreciation of Jesus' birth and resurrection?
3. What does John 1:29 reveal about Jesus’ mission? How can this truth bring peace to your life today?
4. Why can it be easy for us to get distracted and forget our need for a Savior?

5. How does the resurrection give you hope in difficult or uncertain situations? Share a time when the promise of Easter brought comfort to your life.
6. The angels in Luke 2:10-11 announced, “good news of great joy.” How does the resurrection amplify that joy? How can you share this joy with others during the Christmas season?