

1. Have you ever heard of *mega joy*? (**Show**) A young man I asked told me never had.
 - a. I said, *Have you ever heard of mega millions? Oh yeah!* He had heard of mega millions.
 - b. That's more money than the avg person could ever hope to have.
 - c. *Mega joy* is the greatest joy anyone could ever experience.
 - d. *I'd rather have mega joy than mega millions any day*, said the young man (Adam Smith).
 - e. Smart young man. Many people who have mega millions don't have mega joy.
2. In the life of Christ the phrase *mega joy* is used 4xs. It is translated "*great joy*." (**Show**)
3. And each time it is used, it is associated with a significant event in the life of Christ. (**Show**)
4. This has been a new discovery for me. I learn two powerful lessons from this discovery:
 - a. Greatest joy possible is spiritual joy – joy that comes from knowing God.
 - b. Jesus Christ is the way that we receive this joy.
 - i. By associating mega joy only w/Jesus, Bible telling us He is God's way to receive it.
 - ii. And how we receive it is thru the four central events of His life. This is beautiful.

I. **Incarnation, Matt. 2:10: *Mega joy is for all people.***

A. **Gentiles (Show)**

1. Interesting, 1st time we read of *great joy* in NT it is associated w/Gentiles.
 - a. Prophecy about star in OT, Num. 24:17, made by a Gentile, Balaam.
 - b. Star appeared to Gentiles, Wise men. They followed it to Bethlehem.
 - c. And when *fell down & worshiped him*, 1st ones to worship Jesus in Matt = Gentiles.
2. This is very surprising because Matthew is a Jewish gospel.
 - a. Written by a Jew, for Jewish audience, to show them Jesus is a Jewish King.
 - b. Yet the 1st ones to worship that king were Gentiles. God included everyone.

B. **Jesus Came for All**

1. Jesus came to bring His joy to all people. It's for everyone. No one is excluded.
2. Jews/Gentiles; rich/poor; young/old; religious/irreligious; for anyone who seeks Him.
3. He became one of us to bring the joy of God to all of us.

II. **Crucifixion, Luke 2:10: *Mega joy is for forgiven people.***

A. **Shepherds (Show)**

1. 1st ones hear announcement of Jesus' birth were shepherds. (Quote vv. 10-11.)
2. Very surprising. Shepherds = social outcasts. Work w/sheep made ritually unclean.
 - a. Because they couldn't always get to the Temple were considered irreligious.
 - b. That caused people to unfairly classify them w/thieves. Not be witnesses in court.
 - c. They would've felt very far from God & that God had no interest in them.
 - d. People would've said to them that they had no hope of knowing God & His joy.

B. **Savior (Show)**

1. Yet to them was made the very 1st announcement that Jesus would be *a Savior*.
 - a. That speaks of Jesus' cross where He died for the sins of the world.
 - b. Reminds us angel: *You shall call his name Jesus for he shall save people from sins.*
2. This = 1st time in Luke that *good news (gospel) and Savior* are combined.
 - a. Outcast shepherds. Anyone can create a gospel for good people to go to heaven.

- b. But God created a gospel where unworthy people can go to heaven. People w/need.
3. And there is no joy like knowing you have been forgiven & accepted by God.

III. **Resurrection, Matt. 28:8: *Mega joy is for fearful people.***

A. **Women (Show)**

1. 1st ones told of resurrection were women. They also looked down upon. Inferior
 - a. Not witnesses in court. But God chose them to be 1st witnesses of resurrection.
 - b. Notice pattern here. Great joy came to Gentiles, shepherds, women. What going on?
2. God is not ashamed of the lowliness of human beings. God marches right in. He chooses people as his instruments and performs his wonders where one would least expect them. God is near to lowliness; he loves the lost, the neglected, the unseemly, the excluded, the weak and broken. Where human beings say, "Lost," God says, "Found"; where people say, "Condemned," God says, "Saved"; where people say, "No!" God says, "Yes!"

B. **Lowest Point**

1. Did you notice mega joy came to these women at their most fearful point.
 - a. When they saw that Jesus was gone from the tomb they ran in fear.
 - b. Their whole world had been turned upside down and they were alarmed.
 - c. But they had great joy over the news that Jesus was alive. Fear & joy struggled.
 - d. But only the joy was **GREAT** and triumphed in the struggle with fear.
2. When they realized that Jesus was still with them, their joy overcame their fear.
3. Being a Christian doesn't mean we don't have problems that cause us fear.
4. It does mean that we know Jesus is adequate for our fears because He is with us.
4. Tell about Nicaraguan couple who committed their life to Jesus Christ.
 - a. When neighbors asked why they were smiling/laughing all the time when not before.
 - b. *I never had a reason to smile before. Now I just can't stop.* What changed?
 - c. Not circumstances. Still same house; country; husband; job; problems.
 - d. Soul changed. Knew forgiven & child of God. She knew Jesus was with her.
 - e. It's not our problems that always change; presence of Jesus has changed. Joy.

IV. **Ascension, Luke 24:52: *Mega joy is for convinced people.***

B. **Disciples (Show)**

1. Read vv. 51-53. 1st time in Luke's gospel disciples worshiped Jesus. Why now?
 - a. After 40 days of seeing Him after His resurrection they knew He was alive.
 - b. They saw Him, heard him, walked w/him, touched him, ate w/Him.
 - c. And when He ascended it was the capstone to all the proof He had shown them.
2. They knew He was God, Savior, Lord and coming King. Worshiped & great joy.

B. **Convinced**

1. When you know that what you believe is true w/o shadow of doubt = mega joy.
2. Pastor Festo Kivengere lived thru the murderous regime of Idi Amin in Uganda.
 - a. He went to the execution of three men from his area. As approached one startled.
 - b. "Bishop, thank you for coming! I wanted to tell you. The day I was arrested, in my prison cell, I asked the Lord Jesus to come into my heart. He came in and forgave me all my sins! Heaven is now

open, and there is nothing between me and my God! Please tell my wife and children that I am going to be with Jesus. Ask them to accept him into their lives as I did.”

c. We stood in front of them, our own hearts throbbing with joy, mingled with tears. It was a day never to be forgotten. Though dead, the men spoke loudly to all of Kigezi District and beyond, so that there was an upsurge of life in Christ, which challenges death and defeats it.

3. That's the mega joy that comes from Jesus.