'And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”’ – Luke 2:10-11 ESV

'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit.’ – Galatians 5:22-23, 25 NRSV

To the shepherds on that first Christmas, the angels brought ‘good news of great joy...for all the people’. The message of the angels, though concise, was comprehensive and full:

The Fact: ‘unto you is born this day’
The Place: ‘in the city of David’
The Why: ‘a Saviour’
The Who: ‘Christ the Lord’

The shepherds were amazed by this news and overwhelmed with joy that the Lord chose to share it with them. They ran to Bethlehem, they celebrated and they told everyone what they had heard.

For most of the world, Christmas is still a time of joyful celebration. Time off work, enjoying family, giving gifts to loved ones, sharing meals and delighting in family traditions, familiar carols and beautiful decorations.

It can be easy to feel joyful in times of celebration, but what happens when the celebrations are over?

Once the carols end and the lights are turned off for another year, the good news of great joy is still for all people.

Our Saviour is still our Saviour. This is a message for all those who feel broken, who have problems and pain. For those who face challenges or find Christmas hard. You don’t need a Saviour if you have nothing to be saved from. In our brokenness, our problems and pain, the true meaning of Christmas, the arrival of our Messiah and Lord, can give us all lasting joy.

If we remain focused towards our source even when trials and tribulations come, we can experience the joy of the Lord. This joy is an inward kind of joy coming from above, a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22), and we have a responsibility to rejoice in the Lord, always.

As Christmas is rapidly approaching, we hope that we will take time to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

Major Andson Namathanga
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A Prayer for Joy

Dear God,

As we celebrate the birth of your son, Jesus Christ, may the joy of Christmas fill our hearts and homes.

Help us to share this joy with others, and may it remind us of the precious gift of your grace.

AMEN

How does the story of Jesus’ birth and the joy it brings challenge me to seek and embrace joy in the everyday moments of my life, recognising the potential for profound joy even in difficult circumstances?