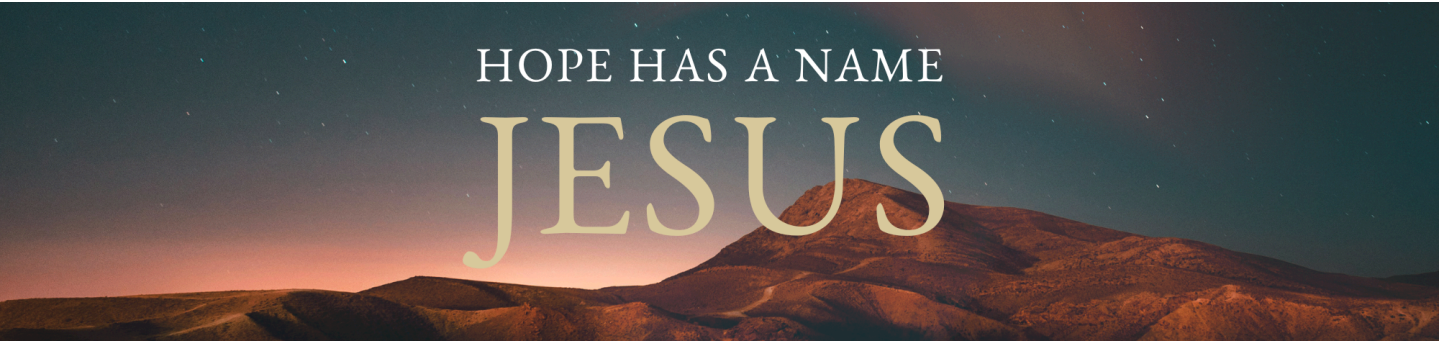




HOPE HAS A NAME JESUS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week 3: Joy

QUESTION 1

This week, we are focusing on the Advent theme of joy. **Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!** To rejoice is to choose joy. Several times in the message, I used the phrase “choose joy.” I know some people love that phrase, while others find it confusing or frustrating. The biblical word that means “choose joy” is rejoice. To rejoice is to choose to celebrate and be joyful. Do you believe that with God’s help, you can choose joy? Do you think that joy is possible for you? Share a story of a time when, despite difficult circumstances, you chose to be joyful.

QUESTION 2

One of the benefits of choosing joy is that it strengthens you. **Nehemiah 8:10 Nehemiah said, “...This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”** Dallas Willard explains how joy strengthens us: “Joy is strength. Its absence will create weakness. The failure to attain a deeply satisfying life always has the effect of making sinful actions seem desirable. Here lies the strength of temptation. Our ability to overcome temptation is directly related to the amount of joy we have in our lives. When we celebrate, when we have joy, we exercise our ability to see and feel the goodness in the simplest gifts of God.” What are your thoughts on this quote?

QUESTION 3

Understanding that joy is a command and recognizing how joy strengthens our lives, the most important question becomes: How do we choose joy? Joy stems from a certain kind of thinking. When our thoughts are consumed with negativity and complaining, and when we are constantly comparing ourselves to others, joy may seem out of reach. Paul reminds us in **Philippians 2:14 Do everything without complaining and arguing.** What are your thoughts on this verse?

How difficult is it for you to follow the commands in Philippians 2:14?

QUESTION 4

We choose joy by choosing to be generous and grateful. Generosity means giving freely. One of life's great paradoxes is that we find joy in giving to those in need. Gratitude is about living with thankfulness for all the gifts God has given you. **Proverbs 11:25 A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.** Do you agree that generosity and gratitude bring joy into our lives?

Tell a story of a time someone was generous with you and how that affected your life, or tell a story about how you found joy through generosity or gratitude.

QUESTION 5

Briefly discuss what it means to you to choose joy. Discuss how this principle works in your life and what are some of the best ways that you have found to rejoice, celebrate, and choose joy in your life.