

Sunday Sermon Questions • 12/14/2025

Advent Week 3 • Joy

When Joy Doesn't Feel Natural

The sermon highlights that joy is a “settled state of contentment” rooted in God’s promises, not our circumstances. Can you think of a time when joy felt out of reach because your circumstances were overwhelming? How might trusting God’s presence in that moment have shifted your perspective?

Mary's Response vs. Our Reality

Mary responded to impossible, overwhelming news with “I am the Lord’s servant.” What stands out to you most about her reaction? In what areas of your own life do you find it hardest to respond with the same surrender and trust?

Happiness vs. Joy: What Are We Really Chasing?

The sermon draws a clear distinction between happiness (circumstance-dependent) and joy (God-dependent). What are some indicators in your own life that you might be chasing happiness instead of joy? How can we reorient our hearts toward joy rooted in God’s promises?

Obedience and Joy Walking Together

Both Mary and Joseph experienced fear, loss of control, and major life disruption—but also profound joy through obedience. How have you seen obedience to Jesus bring joy into your life, even when it was difficult? What step of obedience might God be inviting you into right now?

Joy in the Middle of Fear

Mary and Joseph both experienced fear, uncertainty, and disruption after saying yes to God. Why do you think joy can coexist with fear? How does this challenge the way we usually think about joy in our own lives?

What Joy Reveals About What We Believe

The sermon suggests that joy is a reflection of what we truly trust. What does your current level of joy (or lack of it) reveal about where your confidence is rooted—your circumstances or God’s promises?

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When God's Plan Complicates Our Life

Following God didn't simplify Mary and Joseph's lives—it made them more complicated. How do you typically respond when obedience to God leads to inconvenience, discomfort, or misunderstanding? What helps you remain faithful in those moments?

Herod or Mary: Competing Kingdoms

Herod's pursuit of happiness and control caused him to see Jesus as a threat, while Mary surrendered her life to God's plan. In what ways do we sometimes protect our "own kingdom" instead of embracing God's kingdom? What might surrender look like practically?

Cultivating Joy Through God's Presence

Joy is described as something cultivated through intimacy with God. What practices or rhythms help you become more aware of God's presence? How can those habits shape your ability to experience joy regardless of circumstances?

Prayer Prompt

God, we confess that we often chase happiness instead of the joy You offer. Help us surrender our fear, our need for control, and our circumstances to You. Teach us to trust Your promises, to walk in obedience, and to experience the deep, lasting joy that comes from Your presence—no matter what we face. Amen.