



THE GIFT



THE GIFT OF JOY



JOY:
: the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires

: a source or cause of delight

Luke 2:8-12

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”



Matthew 2:1-3, 9-11

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem ² and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” ³ When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

Joy is not found in _____ but only in JESUS.

Luke 2:20

The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Joy thrives in the presence of HARDSHIP.

1 Thessalonians 1:6

You became imitators of us and of the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

James 1:2-3

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Joy can't be STOLEN but it can be FORFEITED.

Galatians 5:22-23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control.

John 16:22

So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

SO WHAT?

What are you PURSUING as you wait?

Hebrews 12:1b-2

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ²fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.



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NOTES:

Joy is the great note all through the Bible. We have the notion of joy that arises from good spirits or good health, but the miracle of joy of God has nothing to do with a man's life or his circumstances or the condition he is in. Jesus Christ does not come to a man and say, 'Cheer up.' He plants within a man the miracle of the joy of God's own nature.

Oswald Chambers

How to start a relationship with God:

- 1) Admitting that you, like everyone else, are in need of rescue.
- 2) Asking God to forgive your sins.
- 3) Saying YES to God by trusting Jesus as Savior & Lord.

You can do that right now by simply talking to God in a prayer like this:

**Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness.
I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. Today, I recognize
you as my Savior; and I put my faith in you as my LORD.
Help me to faithfully follow you all the days of my life.
In Your name, Amen.**



For Further Reflection:

- :: What has impacted you the most through “The Gift” series of conversations?
- :: Share what about this weekend’s conversation impacted, surprised or was most meaningful to you? Why?
- :: How would you define “joy” in your own words? Where have you, or those around you, sought to find it?

Reread Luke 2:8-12 & Matthew 2:1-3, 9-11

- :: What initially stands out to you in these passages? Why?
- :: How does God’s choosing to announce the arrival of Jesus’ birth first to shepherds, those on the fringes of society, the leading of the Magi, those with wealth and influence, speak to joy being available to all?
- :: How do the three gifts the Magi offered to Jesus speak to His identity?
- :: Pastor Justin said, “Joy is not found in _____ but only in Jesus.” Do you agree with this? What would change if we looked to Jesus as our source of joy and not circumstances, stuff or people?
- :: Share about a time when you or someone you know experienced “Joy thriving in the presence of hardship”? Why/How was this different than a time when you didn’t experience joy in the presence of hardship?
- :: Take a moment to consider what you’ve been pursuing in this season of advent. Are there some areas that you need to realign your focus, fixing your eyes on Jesus? Spaces where you’re forfeiting the gift of joy Jesus’ has offered you?
- :: If so, share with someone who will pray for and hold you accountable.

Unless otherwise noted, today’s Scripture is from the New International Version [NIV].
Justin Barnes (@justinnbarnes) – December 15 & 16, 2018

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