

Advent 2025

Week 3: Joy

Where does true joy come from?

Most of the joy we experience is a feeling that comes and goes with our circumstances—passing moments of happiness or relief. But the joy of God is far deeper. It is the result of His transforming presence.

This is the third week of Advent—a season of anticipation and celebration. We remember the arrival of the Messiah and look forward to His return. This week, our focus is joy.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God promised that joy would one day bloom where despair had taken root. He spoke of renewal so complete that even the wilderness would burst into song.

Listen to these words from Isaiah 35:1-2,10:

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;
it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and singing.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Where there was barrenness, God brings beauty. Where there was sorrow, He brings singing. Where there was exile, He brings homecoming.

Jesus fulfilled God's promise, not just by giving us something to be happy about, but by giving us *his joy*. Listen to John 15:11:

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

The joy of Jesus is not borrowed from the world; it is born of His own divine life. It flows from love—from perfect fellowship with the Father—and it cannot be diminished by grief or loss, hardship or suffering.

When the joy of Christ fills us, the wilderness in our hearts begins to bloom. The dry places become gardens. The barren becomes beautiful.

And one day, when Christ returns, all creation will join the song—the sound of everlasting joy in a world made new.

Reflection

Let's take time to meditate on Jesus and anticipate His coming. After each question, press pause and reflect. Then answer by writing in your journal, talking to your family, or discussing with your community group.

1. Where do you see signs of God bringing life and beauty out of barren places in your world or heart?
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus wants his joy to live within you?
3. In what area of your life are you longing for God to bring transformation and joy?

Prayer

As we pray together, let's open our hearts to the renewing joy of Christ—joy that turns deserts into gardens, mourning into dancing, and sorrow into song.

Jesus, our hearts delight in you. You are a wellspring of everlasting joy.

You transform a world of sorrow, sadness, and grief into a place of abundance and rejoicing, like a desert becoming a blooming garden.

From our ashes, you bring beauty. From our mourning, you bring gladness. From our despair, you bring praise.

And we look forward to a day when all is made new, when sorrow and sighing flee, and we enter your presence singing for joy.