

Week 3: Christ Our Joy

Primary text

Isaiah 55:1-12

Secondary text

Luke 1:26-56

OPENING PRAYER

Lord of joy and promise, as we, your people, listen to your Word, help us to rejoice in what we have not yet seen and to trust that your joy is already breaking in. Amen.

Discussion

READ: Isaiah 55:1–5

“Come, all you who are thirsty... listen, that you may live.”

QUOTE: “The entire life of a Christian is in fact an exercise of holy desire. You do not see what you long for, but the very act of desiring prepares you so that when He comes, you may be filled... The desire of your heart is itself your prayer. And if your desire is continuous, your prayer is continuous too.” — St. Augustine

DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

1. How does this passage reflect an invitation to desire God before we see fulfillment?
2. Have you experienced longing as part of your joy? Or does longing usually feel like lack?
3. How might we learn to cherish the “not yet” of the promise?

READ: Isaiah 55:6–13

“You shall go out in joy... the mountains and hills will burst into song.”

QUOTE: “Heaven is that place alone where is to be obtained our highest end... there alone is the full and proper satisfaction of the capacity of the soul. There is the full, satisfying, glorious, durable joy. God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of Him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied.” — Jonathan Edwards

DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

1. How does knowing the end help shape our experience of joy now?
2. What do we often try to fill our souls with, apart from God?
3. How does this reshape our expectations for Christmas joy?

READ: Luke 1:26–38

“Do not be afraid, Mary... you have found favor with God.”

QUOTE: “Sometimes there will come deep depressions of heart—you can scarcely tell why. That heart of yours which once flew upwards... will lie cold and heavy as a stone on the earth. You will find it hard, indeed, to rejoice. And yet... if our joy is to remain full, it must be guarded and strengthened by a power not our own, even from God Himself.” — Charles Spurgeon

DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

1. How does Mary model joy that exists alongside uncertainty?
2. What in your life feels like it weighs down joy?
3. What do you think Spurgeon meant by a joy “guarded by a power not our own”?

READ: Luke 1:39–56

“He has filled the hungry with good things...”

QUOTE: “The celebration of Advent is possible only to those who are troubled in soul, who know themselves to be poor and imperfect... who look forward to something greater to come. For these, it is enough to wait in hope and humility, and that hope becomes joy.” — Dietrich Bonhoeffer

DISCUSSION PROMPTS:

1. Mary’s song comes from a place of humility and need. Why might joy come more easily to those who are “poor in spirit”?
2. How can hope become joy in our lives—even when the circumstances haven’t changed?
3. Is there a part of your life now where you’re being asked to wait with hope?

CLOSING PRAYER PRACTICE:

Write a short prayer beginning with: “Lord, I rejoice in what I do not yet see, because...”

CLOSING PRAYER: In our hunger. You feed us with hope. In our waiting, you fill us with joy. Even now we rejoice in your coming. Amen.