



UNEXPECTED CHRISTMAS (Part 3) - “Unexpected Joy”

Luke 2:10-11 ESV

Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.

John 15:11 ESV

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

Psalms 16:11 ESV

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

1 Thessalonians 1:6 NIV

for you welcomed the message in the midst of severe suffering with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

Hebrews 12:2 NIV

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.

Romans 15:13 NIV

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nehemiah 8:10 NIV

This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Key Points

- *The opposite of joy is cynicism. If we don't find joy, we're likely to grow cynical.*
- *There is a fullness of joy that God's presence brings.*
- *Joy isn't indifferent to our emotions, but it's not driven by our feelings.*
- *If joy is given, then our posture needs to be one that receives it.*
- *Joy is a posture by which we receive the available goodness of God.*
- *Trust builds and gives way to joy.*
- *Joy is a formative posture that gives us the strength to endure, continue, and trust.*
- *In learning to trust, we find the fullness of joy.*
- *Resilient joy allows us to continue because we believe beyond what we see, what our senses reveal, and what we can understand.*

READ

Open your time together by reading the Scripture passages on Page 1. Then, take a moment to consider what you just read:

- Read Luke 2:10-11 and Isaiah 9:6-7. How do these passages shape your perspective on the source and nature of joy?
- Read John 15:11 and Psalm 16:11. What role does God's presence play in experiencing a fullness of joy?
- Read Hebrews 12:2, Nehemiah 8:10, and 1 Thessalonians 1:6. What does it mean that there is a resiliency to joy?
- Read Romans 15:13. What are the implications to our joy being for the benefit of others?

REFLECT

- What attempts to undermine our joy?
- How does trust contribute to the development of joy?

RESPOND

- Joy gives strength to endure, continue, and trust. Can you share examples from your own life where joy played a role in resilience?
- What holds your attention most often? How does giving this thing your focus influence your ability to experience joy?
- How might embracing resilient joy shape your approach to future uncertainties and difficulties?

PRAY

Close your time together with prayer requests. Ask how you can pray, support, and lift one another up. Pray over these requests collectively or by breaking into prayer partners.