



# JOY

## ADVENT | Week 3

What the world needs is joy. At some level, we all know that, but really internalizing that truth changes the way we see the world around us and the people living in it. Ultimately, just about every activity we pursue and every relationship we nurture is in the pursuit of joy. We want to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. And yet, we never seem to succeed. It's just not enough.

But we are a species that was created intentionally by a loving God to resemble and reflect Him in this broken world. This Creator God is a God of joy because He lacks nothing. That's instructive. The sovereign God of the cosmos is full of joy—and His great desire for every human heart is that they experience joy as well. What if we really lacked for...nothing?

Joy is the outcome of fulfillment.

“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11, ESV). God the Father sent the Son so that the redeemed would actually “enjoy this life with Jesus’ enjoying.” He wants His joy to be our joy. What God has is enough; He is fulfilled. What He has given us is enough, even in the midst of a corrupt context. We are fulfilled, and the free gift of grace is not merely everlasting life, but never-ending joy!

It's like the great old hymn, *Joy to The World* by Isaac Watts reminds us:

No more let sins and sorrows grow,	Far as the curse is found
Nor thorns infest the ground;	Far as the curse is found
He comes to make His blessings flow	Far as, far as, the curse is found.

The ground we walk on has been cursed because of sin. But the King of glory has reversed the curse and made joy available to all mankind. May we all experience and appreciate true and lasting fulfillment this Advent season. Joy to the world!

## It's Time to Rise and Shine

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“Arise! Shine! For your light arrives! The splendor  
of the Lord shines on you!”

### Isaiah 60:1 (NET)

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“It’s time to rise and shine” is a pleasant way to ease into the morning. Those words are meant to gently rouse a sleeper out of the bed and into the day. But those round metal alarm clocks are anything but gentle. No one likes waking up to the loud buzzing of that clock. It leaves us shaking with a heart pounding after a restful slumber.

Isaiah was a prophet who preached several messages to Israel. In one of the first messages he preached, he told Israel they would be taken captive by the Babylonians. Like the loud buzzing of an alarm clock, this was not good news for God’s people. Their hearts must have been pounding after that wake-up call.

They had been worshipping idols and not being the light to the nations God had called them to be (Isa. 43:10). Their lives and their land were filled with evil and darkness; so, God was going to discipline them. But Isaiah also told them God promised to rescue them. He would send a Redeemer (Isa. 59:20) and would make a new covenant with them—enabling them to fulfill their calling by giving them a new heart and a new spirit (Isa. 59:21; Jer. 31:31).

*“Fear not...I am the one who helps you, declares the LORD; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel”* (Isa. 49:14). They didn’t know when this Redeemer would come but they put their hope in God’s promise and waited for the day He would come and set them free.

Isaiah 60:1 is God’s “gentle alarm clock” for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. When they heard the words, “Arise! Shine! Your light arrives,” they would have risen out of bed with a smile on their face and excitement in their hearts. They may have even jumped out of bed and run to their neighbor’s house to see if they had heard the good news.

That is what we celebrate at Christmas: the coming of the Redeemer God had promised. John calls Jesus “the light of mankind,” who “shines in the darkness” (John 1:4-5). Jesus Himself said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

“That is what we celebrate at Christmas: the coming of the Redeemer God had promised.”

We were not meant to live in the dark. In fact, nothing can grow without light; we need it to survive.

Jesus said, “*I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness*” (John 12:47). Jesus came to illuminate the darkness, showing us the way into life and out of sin. The way out is through the forgiveness He offers to those who believe in His Name (Acts 10:43).

Just as God promised the Israelites that a Redeemer would come and set them free from the Babylonians and make a them a light to the nations, Jesus—whose name means *God is salvation*—came to free us from the darkness of sin and enable us to be a light to the world.

## Prayer

Father, thank you for sending your Son Jesus to free us from the darkness of sin and enable us to be a light to those around us. Thank you for the gift of the New Covenant and keeping your promise to send a Redeemer. Help us rise and shine each day and share the joy of the good news of God’s love and forgiveness with others so they don’t have to remain in the darkness. In Jesus’ Name we pray. Amen.

## Further Reflection | Individual Study Questions

1. Do you remember a time in your life when God was trying to wake you up and get your attention?
2. How did you respond?
3. Is there anyone you can pray for or share the good news with that might not know Jesus and joy of his forgiveness?

## Further Reflection | Family Study Questions

1. Have you ever been afraid of the dark?
2. What made you feel better when you were afraid?
3. Have you ever been forgiven or forgiven someone?
4. How does it feel to forgive someone? How does it feel to be forgiven?

### Additional Resources

Download a free printable Advent Calendar with ways for children to be a light during Christmas at <https://mothersniche.com/kids-can-light-world-advent-calendar-free-printable/>

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