



## ADVENT 2021 WEEK 3 - JOY

### Community Group Study Guide Ecclesiastes 6:1-12 – Week of December 19, 2021

The intertestamental period, the time between the word of the last Old Testament prophet, Malachi, and the period of Christ's birth, was one where God removed the remaining elements of national pride from the life of the Jewish people. No kings in David's messianic line held power in Jerusalem, the Temple grounds had devolved into a place of extortion, and the prophets went silent for 400 years. It was a period where the true heart posture toward God was revealed in all. Many fell into apostasy when their idolatry in Israel's national and religious traditions were revealed, while the hearts of true believers were primed to receive and love their Messiah. The true believers in the period had nothing to find hope, joy, peace, and love in except the promises of God in the scriptures and God Himself.

Yesterday's sermon on the topic of "joy" forced us to ponder the "pruning" that God put his chosen people through during the intertestamental period as they awaited the first Advent of Messiah. Our study of Ecclesiastes 6:1-12 forced us to ask ourselves where we are looking to find joy in this life as we await the second Advent of our glorious Lord. Solomon makes clear in verses 1-9 that it is a "vanity, a grievous evil," to seek joy in wealth, possessions, honor, long life, children, work, wisdom, friends, and control. As King of the Hill, who vainly sought joy in many of the good things of this life, his words force us to identify and think about the things that we may be vainly striving for and tirelessly climbing to attain in our own search for ultimate satisfaction.

Upon revealing the vanity of seeking joy in anything in this life in and of itself, Solomon provides two instructions for us as we look for joy. He tells us to (1) recognize the limits of our own wisdom, in verses 10 and 11, and (2) to look outside of ourselves in order to find joy, in verse 12. Solomon instructs us creatures to trust in God's infinite and eternal wisdom as our Creator through all situations of life, and see that we need to receive His rule and reign into our hearts in order to find true and lasting joy. In this Christmas season, we should be astonished at the lengths that Christ descended from his heavenly hill in order to give us access to the infinite joy that we can find in the heart of our Heavenly Father.

### DISCUSSION GOALS

#### Head

To understand that the true source of joy is the heart of God.

#### Heart

To trust that God will deliver when we seek joy in Him as we await the Second Advent.

#### Hands

To actively seek God's wisdom as we make decisions in day to day life.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Christmas Eve Service** will start at **4PM THIS FRIDAY**. It will be streamed online.

The next **Baptism Seminar** will be at 1pm on January 16 in the Temple basement.

For the **Dec. 26 and Jan. 2 services**, we will only be offering **childcare** during the 9:15AM service for ages 0-18 months. No childcare will be offered during the 11:15 am service. **Teens** will also be worshipping upstairs

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

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### **Read Ecclesiastes 6:1-12**

1. Pastor Andy forced us to think about our tendency to play the game of "King of the Hill" in this life in pursuit of lasting joy. Did the sermon help you see that you're vainly playing this game in any areas of life? Or did it help you to see more clearly that you have played this game in any areas of life? More broadly, did it bring to mind anything that you might be placing in the position of an idol in your pursuit of joy?
2. Did the sermon help you identify anything new about your motives behind anything that you are working for or desiring in life?
3. What are some of the consequences of thinking that anything in and of itself in the world can satisfy your deepest soul longings for satisfaction?
4. What does it reveal about your heart when you catch yourself "looking down on" or mistreating people who are below you on a "hill"?
5. When you think about what it means that God is Creator and man is creature what thoughts come to mind?
6. How can thinking about God as Creator and man, especially you, as creature be a source of wisdom and joy?
7. What does it mean that we have to look outward from ourselves to find joy? How does this connect with Christmas?
8. Do you see God's wisdom in any of the ways that he has "blocked" you from attaining something in life?
9. How has understanding this wisdom (see question 8 above) affected your experience of joy in God?