

The Gifts of Christmas

The Gift of Joy

1 Peter 1:8 (NIV) Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

Psalms 126:3,5 (NIV) The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy. Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.

1. Anticipate Joy

Luke 2:10-11 (NIV) But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 2:20 (NIV) The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

What fears are robbing us of joy today?

2. Recognize Joy

Matthew 2:10-11 (NIV) When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

James 1:2-3 (NIV) Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

3. **Choose** Joy

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.

Choosing joy requires:

A. Choosing **Gratitude**

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (NIV) Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4 (NIV) Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

B. Choosing **Obedience**

John 15:11 (NIV) I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

John 15:10 (NIV) If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love.

C. Choosing to **Abide**

John 15:5 (NIV) "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Close with the song: JOY to the World