



Advent Series: Joy
Sermon 3 – Pastor Kevin
December 11, 2022

MAIN SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 35, NLT

¹ Even the wilderness and desert will be glad in those days. The wasteland will rejoice and blossom with spring crocuses. ² Yes, there will be an abundance of flowers and singing and joy! The deserts will become as green as the mountains of Lebanon, as lovely as Mount Carmel or the plain of Sharon. There the Lord will display his glory, the splendor of our God. ³ With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands, and encourage those who have weak knees. ⁴ Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to destroy your enemies. He is coming to save you." ⁵ And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. ⁶ The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland. ⁷ The parched ground will become a pool, and springs of water will satisfy the thirsty land. Marsh grass and reeds and rushes will flourish where desert jackals once lived. ⁸ And a great road will go through that once deserted land. It will be named the Highway of Holiness. Evil-minded people will never travel on it. It will be only for those who walk in God's ways; fools will never walk there. ⁹ Lions will not lurk along its course, nor any other ferocious beasts. There will be no other dangers. Only the redeemed will walk on it. ¹⁰ Those who have been ransomed by the Lord will return. They will enter Jerusalem singing, crowned with everlasting joy. Sorrow and mourning will disappear, and they will be filled with joy and gladness.

WARM-UP

- What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

- As a group, take time to read Philippians 4:4, John 15:11, and Psalm 32:11. After reading these verses, how would you define "joy"?

(Below you will find the main points of this week's sermon along with discussion questions. Feel free to use, reword, or omit questions depending on the needs of your group and the time needed for prayer, care, and fellowship. Thank you for your leadership.)

Thought #1 – There is good news coming!

Verses: Isaiah 35

- As you experience our modern culture, where do you see people trying to find their hope these days? Have you ever tried to find your hope in these things? What did you come to realize about where our hope is found?
- Let's suppose that someone who does not know Jesus asks you to explain what you mean by saying Jesus is your hope. What would you say?
- What is the biggest difference that Jesus has made in your life?

Thought #2 – A way is being made.

Verses: Isaiah 35

- When we look at "our" (Christians) future, what should we be hoping for?
- How does this help when our circumstances seem bleak?
- In what ways has Jesus made a way for you in your life? Marriage? Relationships? Finances? Education? Occupation? Etc.

Thought #3 – Fast-Forward: Jesus is born.

Verses: Isaiah 35, Matthew 11:2-5, James 5:1-6, John 14:15-17, Psalm 16:11, James 1:2, Psalm 27:6, Psalm 126:5, Hebrews 12:1b-2, Luke 2:10-11

- Read James 5:7-10. In your opinion, why is it so important that we should "be patient" and "take courage" at the thought of Jesus' coming?
- Everyone in the group may not be comfortable answering this question, but for those who are comfortable, is there an area of your life where you would like to have your joy "return"? What area? As a group, pray Psalm 51:8.

