



Discipleship Guide

Sermon: Advent: Joy

Speaker: Pastor John Zayas

Date: December 14, 2025

Key Scripture

Isaiah 12:2 – *“Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord himself, is my strength and my defense; he has become my salvation.”*

Key Takeaway

1. Joy Flows From Salvation

- Isaiah’s song of joy comes *after* deliverance, not before difficulty
- Joy is rooted in what God has done, not in what we feel
- Salvation shifts us from fear to trust
- True joy begins when we remember that God has rescued us

2. Joy Replaces Fear With Trust

- Isaiah declares, “I will trust and not be afraid”

- Fear shrinks when trust in God grows
- Advent joy is not denial of pain, but confidence in God's presence
- When salvation is secure, fear no longer has the final word

3. Joy Is Expressed Through Praise and Testimony

- Isaiah calls the people to sing, shout, and proclaim God's deeds
- Joy is meant to be shared, not hidden
- Praise reminds our hearts—and others—who God is
- Our joy becomes a witness to the world of God's faithfulness

4. Advent Joy Is Rooted in God's Nearness

- "Great is the Holy One of Israel among you" (Isaiah 12:6)
 - Joy comes from knowing God is *with us*, not distant
 - Advent reminds us that God didn't stay far away—He came near in Jesus
 - Joy to the world because the Lord has come, and He remains with us
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Discussion Questions

Opening Questions

- What stood out to you most from today's sermon? Why?
 - How would you describe the difference between happiness and biblical joy?
 - When have you experienced joy even in a difficult season?
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Going Deeper

On Joy and Salvation

- Why is salvation the foundation of lasting joy?
- How does remembering what God has saved you from increase joy?

On Joy Replacing Fear

- What fears most often rob you of joy?
- How does trusting God practically help reduce fear?

On Expressing Joy

- Why is praise such an important response to joy?
- How can sharing your testimony strengthen your joy and someone else's faith?

On God's Nearness

- Why does knowing God is "among us" matter so deeply?
- How does Jesus' coming make joy possible even in hardship?
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Personal Reflection Questions (10 minutes)

Take time to pray or journal through the following:

- What circumstances have been challenging your joy lately?
 - How has God been your strength and salvation in this season?
 - Where has fear been louder than trust in your life?
 - How can you intentionally choose joy this Advent?
 - What would it look like to praise God *before* circumstances change?
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Practical Applications

For Those Struggling to Feel Joy

- ☐ Write down ways God has shown up in your life this year
- ☐ Pray Isaiah 12:2 daily as a declaration of trust
- ☐ Listen to worship music that centers on God's faithfulness

For Those Wanting to Strengthen Their Joy

- ☐ Share a testimony of God's goodness with someone this week
- ☐ Spend time praising God without asking for anything
- ☐ Replace fearful thoughts with Scripture

For Everyone

- ☐ Practice gratitude daily—name three things you thank God for
- ☐ Encourage someone else who may be weary

[] Read Isaiah 12 aloud as a prayer of praise

Group Prayer (10 minutes)

Prayer Points

- Thank God for the joy found in salvation
 - Pray for those struggling with fear, heaviness, or discouragement
 - Pray for renewed trust in God's presence and promises
 - Pray that our church would be a people marked by joy
 - Pray that our joy would point others to Jesus
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Additional Resources

Recommended Reading

- *The Joy Project* – Tony Evans
- *Hidden Christmas* – Timothy Keller
- *The Songs of Jesus* – Timothy & Kathy Keller

Scripture for Further Study

- Luke 2:8–20 (Joy announced at Jesus' birth)
- John 15:9–11 (Joy made complete in Christ)
- Nehemiah 8:10 (The joy of the Lord is your strength)
- Philippians 4:4–7 (Rejoicing despite circumstances)

5-Day Devotionals

Day 1: Joy Rooted in Salvation

Reading: Isaiah 12:2–3; Psalm 51:12

Devotional:

Joy doesn't begin with circumstances—it begins with salvation. Isaiah reminds us that God Himself is our salvation, strength, and song. Even when life feels heavy, joy rises when we remember what God has done for us. Ask God today to restore the joy that flows from knowing Him.

Day 2: Trust Over Fear

Reading: Isaiah 12:2; 2 Timothy 1:7

Devotional:

Fear steals joy, but trust restores it. Isaiah boldly declares, “I will trust and not be afraid.” Advent joy grows when we choose trust over fear and faith over anxiety. God's presence is greater than anything you fear.

Day 3: Joy That Overflows in Praise

Reading: Isaiah 12:4–5; Psalm 100

Devotional:

Joy that stays silent eventually fades, but joy expressed in praise multiplies. Isaiah calls God's people to sing, shout, and proclaim His deeds. Let praise be your response today—joy grows when gratitude is voiced.

Day 4: God Is With Us

Reading: Isaiah 12:6; Matthew 1:23

Devotional:

Joy is found in God's nearness. The Holy One of Israel is among us. Advent reminds us

that God didn't remain distant—He stepped into humanity through Jesus. Wherever you are today, God is with you.

Day 5: Joy to the World

Reading: Luke 2:10–11; John 16:22

Devotional:

The angel proclaimed “good news of great joy”—and that joy still echoes today. Jesus has come, and no one can take the joy He gives. Let Advent joy shape how you live, love, and worship this season.

Reflection Questions for the Week

- What has been threatening your joy recently?
- How does remembering your salvation restore joy?
- Where do you need to choose trust over fear?
- How can praise become a daily practice this Advent?
- What does it look like to live as a joyful witness of Christ?