

The Arrival—3

Joy Is Closer Than You Think

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” ¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” ¹⁵When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. ¹⁷When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. ¹⁹But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told. Luke 2:8-20 NIV

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God ... Luke 2:13 NIV

Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven ... Acts 2:2 NIV

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. Acts 9:3 NIV

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God ... Luke 2:13 NIV

Joy isn't an emotion; it's a choice.

... In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy.
2 Corinthians 7:4 ESV

Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake ... Colossians 1:24 ESV

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds ... James 1:2 NIV

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ ...
Philippians 3:8 NIV

... looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.
Hebrews 12:2 ESV

The greatest enemy of joy isn't pain; it's distraction.

Don't let your "one days" rob you of your todays.

TALK IT OVER

Read **Luke 2:8-20**. What stands out to you in this story? How does it build your faith and increase your joy?

Talk about a time when you were in the middle of unmet expectations but still had joy. What happened, and what did you learn about God as a result?

Where have distractions been robbing you of joy? How can you intentionally slow down to experience more joy over the next few weeks?