

You Bring Me Joy

This is the third week of advent and it's the week of joy. We celebrate the joy of Jesus's birth, the joy of His resurrection and the joy knowing He will return for us one day. What is joy and can we really have joy in these times? Joy is great pleasure and delight. It is an emotion, not a conviction or a choice. It comes when we get excited about something magnificent. It comes from deep within the soul.

John Piper defines joy this way, "Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as He causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world." Let's test his definition. We need only go to the night of Jesus's birth. There was such joy. The shepherds, Mary and Joseph looked into the eyes of the King in sheer awe. Even as a newborn babe, Jesus brought joy to all those around Him. They saw the beauty of the Messiah and even the angels rejoiced in great song.

When the wise men found Jesus, they rejoiced in sheer delight because the predictions of the prophets were finally coming true. Even Herod couldn't steal their joy or ours. He felt threatened when he heard the wise men were searching for a new born King. It wasn't in his DNA to stop and consider what great news this was. His thoughts were only on his bruised ego. So he brought sorrow to his kingdom by killing all the baby boys under two years of age.

But praise God, Jesus was ordained to be born as the Son of God, the Messiah, the Savior. God had a plan to bring joy to the world and not even Herod could stop Him. Jesus brought joy then and He brings joy today.

I know it seems odd to talk about joy in the midst of illness and death brought on by the pandemic, and all the effects we are experiencing. There isn't a lot of joyful news coming our way, and if you listen to people talk, most of what they have to say is either negative or discouraging. If you look at Piper's definition of joy, he said something really important. It isn't what is

around us that brings us joy, it's who is in our hearts. It's the Holy Spirit filling us with joy as we look into the face of Jesus.

Knowing Jesus brings us joy. Being in His Presence brings us joy. Knowing who He is deep down in our souls is pure joy. He brings unspeakable joy to our hearts and to our minds, if we let Him and if we listen. We must dig deep and push past the worldly emotions of lack, understanding that we are children of the King. That alone should bring us joy. Rejoice this Christmas because you know the true King. Ask for the Holy Spirit to reveal that sweet joy only available when we make ourselves available to Him. You bring me joy, Jesus!

“You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand.” **Psalms 16:11**

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me. My heart leaps for joy; and with my song I praise Him.” **Psalms 28:7**

Prayer

Lord,

I will rejoice in You always. I will say it again: Rejoice! I will be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer because when anxiety was great within me, Your consolation brought me joy. You make known to me the path of life; You will fill me with joy in Your presence, with eternal pleasures at Your right hand. I delight greatly in You; my soul rejoices in You. For You have clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of Your righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. Today is a day that you have made I will not grieve, for Your joy is my strength. I rejoice! Amen!