

When God Shows Up



Sermon Study - 12.14.2025

Leader Corner

Advent Week 3

Joy

Week 3: Joy: When God Shows Up in Uncomfortable Ways

Main Idea: Joy

Theme: The third week of Advent focuses on cultivating Chara, the deep, abiding joy that comes from God's presence and promises. This joy is not circumstantial happiness but a spiritual strength that anchors our hearts.

Main Passage: Matthew 1:18-25

Main Practice: Gratitude Journal & Sharing Your Joy

Leader Note: Guide your group in reflecting on how God's faithfulness produces joy, even amid challenges. Encourage participants to consider how their personal relationship with God can sustain Chara through daily life and community.

Prayer & Praise

Worship Together:

- "Joy to the World" — any version
- "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" — reflective version

Group Prayer (read aloud):

Jesus, fill us with Your Chara, that our hearts may rejoice in Your presence. May this joy strengthen us to share Your hope with others and live with gratitude each day. Amen.

Prayer Focus:

Invite participants to share one source of joy and one area where they seek deeper joy in God this week.

Principle

1. Joy in God's Promises – Biblical joy is rooted in God's faithfulness, not circumstances - read Luke 1:46-55 (Mary's Song)

- Which promise of God gives you the deepest joy and why?

2. Joy in God's Arrival – read Luke 2:10-11

- How does Jesus' coming bring joy even in unexpected or difficult circumstances?

3. Joy as Strength – read Nehemiah 8:10

- How can joy function as strength in your personal life and your community?

4. Peace and Joy Together – read Romans 5:1-2

- How does God's peace with us enable enduring joy?

5. Sustaining Joy – read Philippians 4:4-7

- What daily habits or spiritual practices help maintain Chara?

Practice

Gratitude Journal:

Encourage each participant to write down one thing each day that reflects God's joy in their life. Share highlights at the next meeting.

Share Joy:

Invite participants to intentionally encourage someone in the group or their wider community this week, reflecting God's Chara.

Further Resources

Daily Readings on Joy:

Monday – Nehemiah 8:10

“Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

Ponder: How does joy (Chara) act as strength in your life right now?

Tuesday – Luke 1:46-55

“And Mary said: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...’”

Ponder: Which promise of God gives you the deepest sense of Chara, and why?

Wednesday – Luke 2:10-11

“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.’”

Ponder: How does the arrival of Jesus create Chara even in challenging situations?

Thursday – Romans 5:1-2

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”

Ponder: How does peace with God lead to enduring Chara?

Friday – Philippians 4:4-7

“Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Ponder: What daily practices help you cultivate sustained Chara in God?