



A People of Joy

Series: Hope of All the Earth

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Mary and Joseph experienced the joy of _____ God was at _____ and God would be with them.

We can experience the joy of God amid our _____ and _____.

- The joy of God's people is not determined by their _____ but by their future _____.

chara - best understood as the natural _____ to the _____ of God, whether _____ or fulfilled.

- Possessing joy is a _____.
- The next step is to _____ our joy to become an _____ as we express it.
- We can be a people of joy because grief and sorrow do not have the _____.

Choosing joy is not a matter of _____ what is wrong in the world but of _____ ourselves to the God who will one day redeem and _____ all creation.

Joy does these things:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Start talking.

- What's something from this past week that unexpectedly brought you joy—big or small?
- When you think of the word “joy,” what comes to mind first: an emotion, a memory, a spiritual practice, or something else?

Start thinking:

- Joseph faced confusion, shame, and fear—yet God invited him into joy. Why do you think joy often shows up in difficult or unexpected places?
- What's the difference between happiness that comes and goes and the *chara* (joy) that comes from God's grace (*charis*)?
- Why do you think Scripture so often connects joy to God's presence, rather than to our circumstances?
- How does the promise that God will one day “*wipe every tear*” (Rev. 21) shape the way we understand and pursue joy right now?

Start Sharing:

- Share a time when you experienced joy and sorrow at the same time. How did God meet you in that tension?
- Which of the “Joy practices” from the sermon—Celebrate, Abide, Read, Meditate, Sing, Give, Ask, Surrender, Serve, Hope—is most meaningful to you right now? Why?
- Which practice is the hardest for you, and what makes it difficult?

Start Praying:

- Pray for God to open our eyes to His grace (*charis*) so that our joy (*chara*) may grow.
- Pray for those who carry grief or hardship—that the joy of Christ would meet them in the middle of it.
- Pray that the Spirit would form us into a people of joy for the sake of others.

Lord, Thank You for the joy You give even in hard seasons. Open my eyes to Your grace and help me choose joy because You are with me and making all things new. Fill me with Your Spirit so that I can carry Your joy to others this week. Amen.

Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week

- Choose one joy practice from the sermon to intentionally live out this week. Commit to it and share how it goes next time.
- Celebrate one specific example of God's faithfulness each day this week—write it down, tell someone, or share it with the group.
- Look for one opportunity to bring joy to someone else through serving, giving, encouraging, or praying.