

SERMON NOTES:



Dec 14, 2025

ADVENT WEEK 3
JOY

Pastor Mick Spann

1. Understanding Advent

- Advent invites us into God's larger story—the renewal of all creation.
- The church calendar helps us retell and relive Jesus' story, joining the prophets in the expectation that "the earth will be full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."
- Tom Wright: "In Jesus God brought heaven and earth together; in his second coming, that joining together will be complete. That is the Advent hope."
- We step into Israel's longing and share their hope—but with even greater confidence because the Messiah has already come. Now we wait for Him to finish what He started.

2. The Challenge of Joy

- As we age, our bodies groan... and so do our souls. Cynicism can begin to quietly grow.
- Cynicism is lethal to joy. It forms a habit of the heart that hopes, trusts and rejoices less.
- Advent meets us right there—in the places where joy feels unrealistic.

3. Advent Joy Is Defiant

- We light the candle of Joy not because life is always cheerful, but because the gospel offers joy deeper than circumstance.
- Joy is not denial. It is defiance. Joy rebels against despair; and protests the darkness.
- Joy grows when we remember the true story we belong to, not the fearful stories we tell ourselves.

4. Joy as Gospel Announcement

- In the ancient world, a victorious king sent messengers with "evangelion" (good news).
- The angels' proclamation in Luke 2:10 is royal "evangelion":
"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."
- In simple terms: GOOD NEWS! The King is here!
- Joy is not sentimental feeling—it's the declaration that everything has changed.

5. Joy Strengthens (Nehemiah 8:10)

- After the Law was read, the people wept—but Nehemiah said: "Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."
- Not the joy of circumstances, success, or a clear conscience...
- God's own joy becomes our strength.
- Joy remembers the plot line! God rescues. God renews. God resurrects. God reigns.
- Isaiah 51:11: "Everlasting joy will crown their heads."

6. Mary: Joy born even in the midst of confusion (Luke 1)

- Mary's first response wasn't excitement but concern and confusion:
 - "Mary was greatly troubled..." (Luke 1:29)
 - "How will this be...?" (Luke 1:34)
- She chooses obedience before she feels joy:
 - "I am the Lord's servant... May your word to me be fulfilled." (Luke 1:38)
- Joy arrives later—through Elizabeth's blessing:
 - "Blessed are you..." (Luke 1:42)
- Only then does Mary sing:
 - "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour..." (Luke 1:47)
- Joy often awakens in community before it awakens internally.

8. Joy Is Communal

- Scripture shows joy shared among God's people:
 - Psalms: "the congregation rejoicing."
 - Nehemiah 8: communal celebration.
 - Luke 2: angels to shepherds (plural).
 - Acts: the church ate with "glad and sincere hearts."
- Joy multiplies when we remind one another where we see God at work in their lives.
- A good example is how Paul did it: (1 Corinthians 1:2–9)
 - Paul reminds the Corinthians they are:
 - Sanctified (set apart) — 1 Cor. 1:2a
 - Part of a worldwide family — 1 Cor. 1:2b
 - Enriched by grace and knowledge — 1 Cor. 1:4–6
 - Equipped and sustained as they await Jesus — 1 Cor. 1:7–9
- The Christian story has a shape — and Jesus is the shaper.
- Only by living inside that story do we discover lasting joy.

10. Joy in foreign territory (1 Peter 1:8–9)

- Peter writes to scattered believers: "Though you have not seen him... you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy..."
- Joy does not require perfect conditions, cultural power or public approval.
- Joy is what shines when God's people live as a contrast community, a kingdom-light even in shadow lands.

IS THERE SOMETHING PRACTICAL WE CAN DO
TO HELP US CONSIDER THESE THINGS?

I'm glad you asked!

Practicing Joy (Embodied Rhythms of Joy you can try at home)

1. Joy through Singing

- Sing even when you don't feel like it.
- Singing forms the soul; joy can grow... maybe for you it can start in the lungs.

2. Joy through Lighting a Candle

- Candles aren't magical... but the process can remind us to slow down.
- Breathe...
- Name one moment of joy or gratitude. Give attention to the 'shy presence' of joy.

3. Joy at the Table

- Choose one meal to eat slowly.
- Practice gratitude by feasting. Rebeling against despair; protests the darkness and proclaiming the goodness and abundance of our heavenly Father.

4. Joy through noticing (and proclaiming) God's Work in others

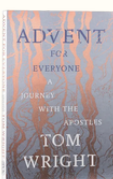
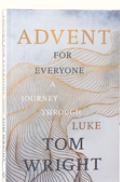
- Like Elizabeth, speak blessing - have eyes attuned to the way God is using others for His Kingdom sake. AND LET THEM KNOW!

Books that have helped Pastor Mick in preperation for this series:



Advent: The Season of Hope
(Fullness Of Time Series)
Tish Harrison Warren

CLICK HERE



Advent For
Everyone
N. T. Wright

CLICK HERE



The Bible Project
"JOY" Video

CLICK HERE



Advent Word Study
Chara: "Joy"





ADVENT 2025: WEEK 3



DAY	VERSE	REFLECTION QUESTION
Sunday Dec. 14	Psalm 105:43	The ancient Israelites experienced inexpressible joy when God brought them out of slavery in Egypt. When in your life have you experienced moments of inexpressible joy?
Monday Dec. 15	Isaiah 51:3	What would it be like for all of the broken-down, desolate places in your community to be made new, like a flourishing garden?
Tuesday Dec. 16	Luke 2:10-11	How do you think you would feel if your people had been suffering under foreign rule for centuries and you saw an angel appear, announcing that your long-awaited king had finally come?
Wednesday Dec. 17	John 15:10-11	What's the difference between commanding people with a motivation to control them and commanding people with a motivation to bless them and fill their lives with joy? How do Jesus' commands bring joy?
Thursday Dec. 18	Matthew 5:11-12	What's your first impulse when you're insulted or persecuted? Why do you think Jesus tells us to rejoice when people mistreat us for following his ways?
Friday Dec. 19	2 Corinthians 6:10	When we face difficult circumstances, how can we hold both joy and grief together?
Saturday Dec. 20	Romans 15:13	As God fills us with hope, that hope spills out onto others. What words or actions could you offer in order to give hope to others?

Watch the Joy Video

