

# Joy

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Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[ 0 : 00 ] If any kids want to sing, they're welcome to Come On Down.

Come On Down.

Come On Down.

Come On Down. Come On Down.

Come On Down.

[ 2 : 27 ] Come On Down.

Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down.  
Come On Down.

Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down.  
Come On Down.

Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down.  
Come On Down.

Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down.  
Come On Down.

[ 3 : 47 ] Come On Down. Come On Down. Come On Down. Now On Down. Can On Down.

Discovery of Garrafs top art. And the angel said to him, And he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born.

He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of their parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

Zechariah asked the angel, How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years. The angel said to him, I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God.

And I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time.

[ 5 : 24 ] This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. As we're in the midst of Advent season, I want to remind you that we have an Advent booklet that's put together. Pastor Lisa put this together with a number of people from our congregation making submissions.

So take one on the way out of church to help you prepare your hearts for the Advent season. I'd like to invite you if you're able to stand as we're going to sing together, O come, O come, Emmanuel.

I'd like to invite you to sing together, O come, O come, Emmanuel.

And ransom captive Israel that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

[ 7 : 04 ] O come, O Israel. O come, O Israel. O come, O Israel. O come, O Israel. O come, O Israel.

And order all things far and nigh. To us the path of knowledge show And cause us in a ways to go Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee On his prime end O come, O come, great Lord of might Who to thy tribes on Sinai's light In ancient times once gave the law In cloud and majesty and awe Rejoice, rejoice Emmanuel shall come to thee

Of Israel O come, the King of David The Lord O come, the King of David O come, the King of David The King of David O come, the King of David The King of David The King of David risen free and conquer death's deep misery Rejoice!

Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to the of Israel The Lord be with you.

Take a moment, if you will, and greet your neighbor with the peace of the Spirit. . . .

[ 9 : 22 ] . . .

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. . . . . nobody has to give you a gift not your mother your father your aunts and uncles your grandparents not even santa claus nobody has to give you a gift you know why they give you a gift because they want to give you a gift because they love you and they like you so they give you a gift just to be nice so that means whatever we get gifts we get we should be happy right yeah and thankful because they didn't have to give us anything you know god doesn't have to give us anything he doesn't have to give us the air we breathe or the food we eat or the life we have and he certainly doesn't have to give us heaven and glory forever and ever but he does it because he loves us okay so remember it's all a gift what god gives to us and you don't have to give a gift either but you give them because why we love people right okay what do you thank for this morning raise your hand if you want to share something mom and dad family and friends family my family family and friends my brother daddy over there sherry sherry mommy give me her present my mom and my dad all right let's pray that lord we thank you for our parents we thank you for the blessings of having people who love us and we can love help us always to give gifts and joy and thanksgiving for it's in jesus name we pray amen okay you guys can all go out to church school all the kids are invited to go out to church school now if they'd like to thank you good morning are you ready to continue rejoicing rejoicing in the lord oh good good good i'm glad i'm glad even if it takes a minute i'm glad i'm glad we're here well we continue to rejoice in the lord as we bring our gifts tithes and offerings before god knowing that this too is an act of worship guys and residents we need this fun out to ask them to engage them to receive anything of sing

[ 13 : 22 ] Let your light light up your face shine on us. Lord, let your light light up your face shine on us.

Let we, let we may be saved. Let we, let we may have tried to find our way in the darkest night.

Let your light shine on us. Let your grace shine on us.

Lord, let your grace raise from your hand upon us.

Lord, let your grace raise from your hand upon us.

[ 14 : 57 ] Let your light light up your face shine on us. Let your light light up your face shine on us.

Let your light light up your face shine on us.

Let your grace shine on us. Lord, let your love come with no end.

Come over us. Come over us. Lord, let your love come with no end.

Come over us. Let our grace shine on us.

[ 16 : 18 ] Let your love come over us Let your praise fall on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us

Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us

Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Let your light shine on us Praise God.

I want to call to your attention as we enter our time of prayer. We don't do this every single week, but every single week they are there on the back of your bulletin. Names of all kinds of people who have prayer concerns.

As you spend time in prayer during the week, lift them up. Lift those folks up and remember that God knows their needs. Even if we don't, we just need to be mindful that they're in need of our prayers.

[ 19 : 35 ] Amen? And especially this morning, we want to be in prayer for Shirley Darnell. She's in the hospital, and we want to pray for her healing and pray that she be returned to her family.

We're going to go to the Lord in prayer, and you are welcome to join me from your seat or kneeling or standing at the rail with me. Come forward and meet the Lord in your hearts, bodies.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, it is so wonderful to come before you.

You are the God who hears and answers prayers, and we are humbled and awestruck by your great power, by your great love, by your great mercy toward us.

You know what we need before we even ask. And as we voice our prayers or lift them up in the silence of our hearts, we know that you will hear them.

[ 20 : 43 ] We know that you will answer them according to your perfect will. Sometimes, Lord, we don't see the answer exactly the way we have imagined it or envisioned it in our minds, but you are the one who brings the answers to all of our prayers.

As we enter this Advent season, Lord God, we pray that you would fill our hearts with joy, that it would be overflowing, that we would be lights in this dark world, that the people of our communities, the people in the stores, the people at work and at school, wherever it is that we go, would see your love and your mercy because of our presence there and your presence in us.

Help us, Lord, to be patient with those who are busy and running around and doing all kinds of things. Help us, Lord, to be kind, especially, Lord, to those who have been treated unkindly.

Most especially, Lord, to those who treat people unkindly. Help us to be that witness of kindness.

Help us to be peacemakers in the midst of strife and trouble. Just help us to show your joy.

[ 22 : 30 ] Lord, we lift up all of those people who are sick and infirm, who are in need of a healing touch from you. We pray that you touch them by your Spirit and that they be made whole in their spirits and their souls and in their bodies.

We pray also for those people who care for them. their family members and friends, Lord, their doctors and nurses and other medical professionals.

We just ask in Jesus' name for them to have wisdom, for them to have compassionate hearts, soft voices, loving actions and loving actions and hearts.

We pray, Lord God, for all of those who are grieving losses. This time of the year that memories come up so vividly.

Thanksgiving and through Christmas and through Christmas and the preparations and into the new year, Lord, memories are always so clear.

[ 23 : 43 ] Help us. Help all who are in need of healing, of hearts. Help us. Help us. Help us. Help us. Help us. Help us. Help us. Help us. Help us. Help us.

Help the memories to be good memories and blessed memories. Envelop those who are grieving in your arms of love by your Holy Spirit.

Bring them peace. Lord God, as we come to hear your word, let it wash over us and transform us, making us into people who exude your joy no matter what the circumstances may be.

No matter what we face in our lives, we may show the world that the joy of the Lord is our strength. Be with Pastor Tom as he brings the message this morning.

Let it be a blessing to him and to us. Lord God, make all of our worship to be a blessing to you. That is why we came.

[ 24 : 58 ] To be touched by you, Lord, and to touch your heart with joy. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Lord God's scripture. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Hear. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Hello, everyone. Good morning.

Our scripture this morning is from 1 Peter 1, verses 3-9. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 26 : 12 ] In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade.

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who, through faith, are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

In all this, you greatly rejoice. Though now for a little while, while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials, these have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

Though you have not seen him, you love him. And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

This is the word of the Lord. Amen. Doesn't it just make you want to smile?

[ 28 : 41 ] Have a holly jolly Christmas. Have a good time. By the way, you like my new tie clip? I just got that from one of the girls. Very nice gift. You know, this time of year, there's so many things that make us smile, aren't there?

The music, the sights and sounds. People are actually nicer to each other this time of year. We get gifts this time of year. We just have all sorts of things that make us feel happier.

Do you know why we feel happier? Because we relive the memories of Christmas gone by. Because we remember Christmas, whether we realize it, in the back of our mind, from the time we're this big all the way up.

And each time we do it, we re-experience all the joys from the past. It's called hominosis. It's just like last Thursday. Last Thursday, you had hot dogs and hamburgers and potato salad for lunch.

Right? That's what you ate for dinner, isn't it? No, that would be Fourth of July, right? We had turkey and stuffing and mashed potatoes and probably squash and sweet potatoes and all these kind of things.

[ 29 : 54 ] Now, that's pretty hard in a household where I've got a vegetarian, a gluten-free, and a junketarian, but I enjoy dinner anyways. But it wasn't just the meal. It was the experience of going through it.

And even though all I had was my little family this year, all the great cloud of witnesses were with me. My aunts and uncles, my cousins, my brothers and sisters, my mother and my father, my grandparents, all gathered all those memories that are part of that.

Did you get up and watch the Macy's Day Parade? Right? Where was Bullwinkle? Come on. They can't talk about it but not bring her back. See, certain things have to be just right, and if they do, they cause the memories to flood back into our lives, and they bring us joy, a wonderful joy.

We're talking about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, excuse me, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Today, I want to talk to you about joy, the joy that comes from our faith, not a joy that comes because we have a philosophy or an idea or a moral code, but a joy that comes because God himself has become incarnate in our lives, and because each time we think of it, each time we pray to God, each time we worship God, all the memories of our entire life of faith come back to us, and it should bring peace and joy and love and hope and all those things that make our lives blessed.

[ 31 : 32 ] Joy. In verse 6 of this passage from 1 Peter, it says it's that we greatly rejoice. Even in the midst of struggles, we greatly rejoice.

It's a gift from God, like opening a gift on Christmas morning. No way!

No way! No way! No way! I mean, it's so incredible to get the right gift. It makes you want to jump out of your skin.

It's so good. The gift is right. No way! You know, we give the gifts more for what we see and the people will receive them than in even getting them.

The joy is in watching people have that blessing come over their heart. In verse 8, it describes the joy that gives to us, that God gives to us, as inexpressible, a glorious joy.

[ 32 : 36 ] And we need that joy because life can be tough. Life can be really, really hard. In the beginning of our service, we have this passage read from the first chapter of Luke about Zachariah.

Zachariah was a priest and his wife, and they had been married for a long time. And they had gone through difficult times and struggles because they wanted to have a child, and they couldn't.

And now, at this point in time, they're older than dirt. Well, okay. They're in their upper 80s. So if you're in your upper 80s, I apologize for calling you older than dirt.

But in terms of having a child, that's old. 80-something-year-old people don't have children. Now, you know, I tell you that because I don't want you to think this is like a 45-year-old woman who had waited.

This lady has waited forever just to have the things that we would consider to be normal in life for most people. A child.

[ 33 : 44 ] One child. But it wasn't to be. And yet they served God, and they believed in God, and they held on to their faith in spite of this disappointment. And life can be like that for all of us.

Why do I have these troubles with my child? Why can't my parents be more like? Why don't I have a job like so-and-so? Why is it that this happens to me? How come?

And most of us have something in our life that if we could just have that one thing taken away, we would be filled with inexpressible joy. For Zachariah and Elizabeth, it was having a baby.

That's all they really wanted. But it wasn't to be, and they were so deeply disappointed. And he went because it was the day he was supposed to go into the Holy of Holies, a special honor, to put incense before the Lord.

And an angel appeared to him. And the angel said, You're going to have a child, Zachariah. And Zachariah looked at him and said, My wife is older than Dirk.

[ 34 : 56 ] He didn't actually say that. It was kind of polite. You know? He did it in a polite way. But that's basically what he said. So I don't see how this can happen, pal.

And the angel, and I pictured that the angel whacked him upside the head, but that's just my own impression of the story, and said, Dude, I'm Gabriel. I'm not just a regular old angel.

I'm the archangel Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God. If I say you're going to have a child, you're going to have a child. But because he didn't believe, you're not going to speak until that child's born.

You know, even when people give us a great promise, we get caught up so much in the pain and the disappointment that we don't know how to respond.

You know, Elizabeth, his wife, became pregnant, and for five months she hit herself. Can you imagine? She hit herself because she assumed, This is not going to happen, and I'm not going to be embarrassed by going out and telling everyone and then finding out it's not true.

[ 36 : 00 ] Life can be disappointing. We can expect something wonderful to happen. Well, and then, like these two, it doesn't work the way we want it.

Okay, early Christmas present for you guys over here. Oh, a big box. It's not a rice cake.

And that is all. I think this is a joke. This is a joke! Why is it a joke? Those are your gifts. Okay. Mel, you like it? Is this all I got, really? Abby, what did you get?

You didn't even show me anything. No. Isn't that what you asked for? No. Do you like it? Yeah. Mel, you like yours? How's it taste? I'm sorry.

I'm sorry. Abby, you're going to be really clean this year for Christmas, aren't you? What's the matter, hon?

[ 37 : 01 ] I feel bad because I hate it. I hate it! It's awful! You gave me a big bottle of soap!

You know, the sad part is, is I remember when we first started out in life, we were happy if we could give our daughter a wrapped up bottle of soap. She would get oranges and grapefruits that we got from my Uncle Harry, who sent her from Florida to us.

That was her stocking. That's what we had. We'd wrap up batteries. We'd wrap up a package of gum. That's what you get because that's what we had. Don't play this joke on your kids. It's mean. It's cruel.

But life can be cruel, can't it? We can have expectations of all sorts of wonderful things, and when it doesn't work out, we start to get disappointed and discouraged.

Peter says, in all of this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith, of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire, may result in praise, glory, and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

[ 38 : 15 ] The presence of God's joy in our life, his Holy Spirit working within our spirit, can give us joy even when life is not going the way we want it to go.

In the Bible, there was a man named Nehemiah, and they had told him that he could take the people of Israel home from captivity in Persia. And so they went home to rebuild Jerusalem, and I imagine in their minds they had this picture of Jerusalem as the way they left it, with the temple and the walls and their homes and things, and all they'd have to do is go and refurbish it a bit.

And when they got there, they'd find a pile of rubble. A total rebuild. And as Nehemiah is standing with the people of God, looking at this mess and considering the huge monumental task that they had to undergo, he said to the people, go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared.

This day is holy to our Lord. Don't grieve. For the joy of the Lord is our strength. Not our houses, not our temple, not our buildings, not our jobs.

The joy of the Lord is our strength. I deal with a lot of people who have struggles. Sometimes they'll even come to the rail, and I'll pray for them.

[ 39 : 40 ] And I'll pray for healing because I believe it occurs. I've seen it happen, miraculous healing. But I've also had times when God simply tells people, no, that's not the way it's meant to be.

And when the people come up, I'll pray for their healing. But I also pray that the Holy Spirit of God will come into their lives. Because I know that when we have the power of God in our lives, when we experience the joy of the Lord, it causes us to forget the pain and the hurt and the struggle of life.

Since about the age of 17, I've had pain in my back, thanks to high school wrestling. Now I'm starting to get pain in my knees, thanks to high school football. Are you picking up a theme here?

I'm also getting arthritis in my hands. So there isn't a day that goes by when I don't feel pain. Normally when I'm standing in front of you, I'm feeling pain, and these concrete floors don't help at all.

But when I'm preaching, and when I'm experiencing the power of God in worship, I don't think about the pain. I don't consider the hurt. It doesn't even cross my mind.

[ 40 : 52 ] It disappears. You know, people get a lot of prescribed drugs these days for pain. And the truth is, all those drugs do, from what I understand, is cause endorphins in your system to release.

So actually, you already have the best pain medicine in the universe in you. Because really and honestly, God can give you such a wonderful feeling that you will not feel the pain in your life.

The joy of the Lord is not just a feeling. It's an experience of the living God being born again into our lives, which gives us the strength to go through the troubles and difficulties of life.

As Philippians chapter 4 says, I can do everything through Christ who gives me strength. So God gives us joy even when our lives seem to hurt.

But there's something else that God talks about and that Peter shares with us in this passage. He said in verse 7, as I read to you, that Christ will be revealed.

[ 42 : 07 ] Will be revealed. Will be revealed. Have you ever watched one of those home shows where they fix up houses? I don't know if you've ever noticed, but all they ever show in the first part is all the problems.

Oh, we're going through that and found out it's a support wall. That's going to cost you another \$8,000. Oh, we ran into a septic tank in the backyard. That's about \$20,000. That'll cost you. So all you're seeing is problems and troubles and work all the way through.

They never show you anything they fix. They talk about it, but they don't show you until the end of the show. It's called the reveal. Because the idea is if they showed you along the way and said, yeah, I just wanted to see what they were doing with the bathroom, and you go off and that'd be the end of it.

They know that they're going to keep all that good stuff until the end. And then they're going to reveal it so you'll watch the whole show. So that's how they get you in. I just watched the last two minutes.

It works. I don't care what they went through. I just want to see the reveal. God is giving us a reveal, an amazing, an amazing promise.

[ 43 : 18 ] For you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. God in this life is wonderful. But the fact that God promises us eternal life and glory forever is an incredible promise that helps us endure the difficulties of life as we look forward to the amazing, overpowering glory of God.

And if we lose that joy, if we lose that hope, if we lose that sense of promise for the future, we end up with depression, resignation, and sadness.

In verse 4, it says that this inheritance can never perish, spoil, or fade. It's kept for you in heaven. And it's shielded by God's power.

But there are things in our life that do fade, that do disappoint, that do discourage us. And when that happens, it affects our entire sense of life.

I grew up in a world where my entire generation was promised that our future would be better than our parents. That we would do better and our life would be better than anything our parents ever experienced.

[ 44 : 40 ] We believed it. They believed it. We worked towards it. And it drove us forward. Unfortunately, the way in which we talk to our generation today is that they'll be lucky if their life is as good as ours.

That all they have to look forward to is disappointment, conflict, trouble, and a life that's going to be worse. Now, I can't tell you that that's true or it's not true.

All I can tell you is if you live in that kind of sense of hopelessness and frustration and despair, it will take apart your whole soul and your life.

God gives us hope because hope leads us forward. And that makes our world and our lives better than it'd be if we didn't have it.

Paul talks about this in 1 Corinthians. He says, if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.

[ 45 : 43 ] You're still in your sins. And those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. If only for this life we have hope in Christ. We're to be people most pitied.

If all we've got to look forward to is this world we live in, our lives are depressing. Faith and hope are believing in something we haven't seen yet.

Like the Christmas gifts that we anticipate opening. Do any of you put the gifts out before Christmas little by little? You know, when we buy them, as we buy them, we put them under the tree.



And in fact, by the way, we don't even open our Christmas cards until Christmas morning. We just let it stack up. Because we found that it's really cool to sit down and actually go through all of them and read them in one setting.

It has a much more powerful effect than just reading one at a time. So we anticipate it. In fact, this entire season is actually called Advent season.

[ 46 : 47 ] It's not Christmas season. Christmas season starts December 25th. And by the time we get to December 25th, everybody says, ah, put the lights away. Turn off the smoke. Don't want to hear that music anymore. It's the Advent season.

The season of anticipation. The preparation for this incredible reveal that drives us forward. That causes us to go through all the hustle and bustle and running around.

And preparations for this spectacular revelation. In verse 3, Peter says, praise be to the God, our Father, our Lord Jesus Christ.

In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. He has given us a living hope that drives us through this life and into the next one in joy.

And people, they're funny because they'll say to me, don't wait too late to retire. And then they'll usually tell a story. Because I know somebody, he just retired and two weeks later he died.

[ 47 : 55 ] That could happen to you. And I always think, so? Why do I care about that? Because if I die, I go to glory. You follow? Yeah, but you'll miss out.

I won't miss out on anything. If I'm in glory instead of here, I'm better. You get it? It's better. Yeah, but you won't get a chance to. It doesn't matter.

I will be in glory. It's better than anything this world can promise. Now, I'm looking forward to the possibility of exchanging some of the things I enjoy doing, like being a pastor, for some of the things I'd like to do with my wife, like traveling or having time to take care of all those things you never have time to take care of, stuff like that, right?

But I don't worry about that I'm going to not have enough time to do something in this world because it doesn't matter. The one to come is better.

If you live with a real joy, a real hope, a real understanding of faith in the life to come, then all that we're going through seems like small stuff because we know the best is yet to come.

[ 49 : 04 ] How many of you had pie on Thanksgiving? Yeah. How many of you really shouldn't have eaten it because you were already stuffed full? But you ate it anyways, didn't you? Because the best is at the end, and I'm not missing it.

I'm celebrating. And the truth is, I'm not going to rely on something earthly to relieve my pain and my struggle, some short-term little feeling of happy when I've got the joy of the Lord as my strength.

1 Corinthians 15 continues by saying, Christ indeed has been raised from the dead. He's the firstfruits of those fallen asleep, and you all will go on to be with him as well.

He's the firstfruits where the fruitcake, something like that. That doesn't make any sense. It doesn't make any sense. And he says that this inheritance is protected by heaven and shielded by the power of God.

It will happen. Just like Gabriel said to Zechariah, dude, this will happen. It doesn't matter what you think or what you say. The glory of the Lord will be revealed.

[ 50 : 11 ] It doesn't matter what Republicans or the Democrats do. God's glory will happen. It doesn't matter what Russia does. We will live in glory forever.

Amen? And that gives us the confidence to go through the struggles of life, knowing that God's joy is still with us. Verse 8 says, Though you haven't seen him, yet you love him.

And even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. A joy that's so overwhelming by the power of the Holy Spirit that it blows us away.

We don't need a God we can prove. We don't need an intellectual concept of God. We don't need God to be our moral judge. We need a God we can experience that transforms our very being.

Zechariah was struck in silence. And the reason was, Gabriel said, because he didn't believe. He didn't believe what God said.

[ 51 : 21 ] I've had people ask me because they look around and they see a lot of churches in our nation are struggling. They're struggling. It almost seems as if God himself is trying to quiet them and shut them up.

And it's because they express anger. They express judgment. They express self-righteousness. They express hate and hurt. And that's not the message God wants.

Go to the rest of the world and you'll see the church blossoming all over the place because they praise God with joy and they experience the amazing power of the Holy Spirit.

If we as Christians don't proclaim the joy of the Lord, don't proclaim the wonder of the Lord, and all we offer is some sort of judgment and moral superiority, is it any wonder that God himself might quiet our mouths?

Because God created us. God calls us as Christians to proclaim joy. The church is supposed to be a place of joy, of hope.

[ 52 : 34 ] It's like putting up the Christmas lights this time of year. We do it because we drive down these dark, depressing roads. At 3.15 in the afternoon, it's already dark.

And we're like, really? Really? If this is not depressing? Hello? And it lasts until like 10 in the morning? It's awful. So we put up lights and we say, we will not let the darkness overcome us.

We bring the light of the world. So we'll hang the greens later. We're going to have a good time and a party and a celebration. And yes, even Santa Claus will come. Because we proclaim light in the darkness.

We celebrate the presence of God. That's why we have parties. That's why we have concerts. Because we're supposed to enjoy being together with God.

Have any of you ever been here for VBS when the kids are worshipping? That's what church is supposed to be like. If you did that every time you came to worship, you'd be exhausted.

[ 53 : 38 ] But you'd be thrilled. Because the joy of the Lord would be your strength. Instead, we go, yeah, I want to sing for the joy of the Lord.

Really? Joy to the world, the Lord is God. Can we get the sun over so I can go home? Let me ask you.

Honestly, how many of you feel better after worship? And how many of you feel worse? How many of you feel better? How many of you feel worse? I dare ask the question.

Look at that. Nobody. I have gone to churches. I shouldn't say this. Not picking on anybody. Hang on, pour it out of my court. Where the music is really not very good.

And I come out feeling better. Not because of anything anybody did. But because of what God did. We come here to be with the living God.

[ 54 : 36 ] So that he can become incarnate. Born into our lives. Our hearts. Our churches. Our world. And that will change the world. And by the way.

Santa Claus. And holly jolly stuff. And reindeers flying. And all that stuff. I know that bothers some of you. But let me tell you what that's about.

God is going to make the world celebrate his son's birthday. We have people who call themselves atheists. And don't believe in God. Giving people these gifts going.

Merry Christmas. We have people that don't even belong to our faith. Say Merry Christmas to each other. They are celebrating God's son's birthday.

If you've ever had a birthday party. Where none of the kids show up to your kid's birthday party. That is the most awful experience in the world. God is not going to have anybody. Who's not showing up to his party.

[ 55 : 36 ] So celebrate it. Have a holly jolly Christmas. It's the best time of the year. You know what Zachariah means? It means that God remembers.

God remembers. No matter what you're going through. No matter what your struggles in life. No matter what you're feeling. And how you're starting to sense this idea of hopelessness.

God remembers. And he remembered Zachariah and Elizabeth. And out of a dead womb. And a woman older than dirt. Came the promise of God.

And Isaiah, he says, The people living in darkness have seen a great light. Those living in the land of deep darkness. A light has dawned on them. For to us, a child is born.

To us, a son is given. And the government will be on his shoulders. Say it with me. And he will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty God. The everlasting father.

[ 56 : 38 ] The prince of peace. This is what God calls you to say. To share. To live into. The joy of the Lord is our strength. And we're going to shout it. We're going to shout it to the north.

To the south. To the east. To the west. Better get yourself loosened up. We're doing a little Christian aerobics. Everybody stand up. Here we go. Stretch out.

I don't want you to hurt yourself, you know. Guys, you're supposed to kick it off. Let's see how well you can do. Men of faith, rise up and sing Of the great and glorious King You are strong when you feel weak In your brokenness complete Here we go.

Ready? Ready? Ready? Ready? Ready? Shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all Lord of heaven and earth Let's hear the ladies.

Guys of women of the truth Stand and sing to broken hearts Who can know the healing heart Of our glorious name of love Shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all He's Lord of heaven and earth We will shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all Lord of heaven and earth We've been through fire We've been through rain We've been refined by the power of his name We've fallen deeper in love

[ 58 : 47 ] We've fallen deeper in love with you You've burned the truth on our lips Shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all He's Lord of heaven and earth We will shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all He's Lord of heaven and earth Rise up church with broken wings Fill this place with songs again Of our God who reigns on high By his grace again we'll fly Okay, the adult way to sing this is like this

Ready? Shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all He's Lord of heaven and earth That's not how we sing it Ready?

Ready? Let's go! Shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all He's Lord of heaven and earth Go ahead and try!

Shout to the north and the south Sing to the east and the west Sing to the east and the west Jesus is Savior to all He's Lord of heaven and earth Lord of heaven and earth Lord of heaven and earth Lord of heaven and earth He's Lord of heaven and earth Lord of heaven and earth Stand and lift up my hands For the joy of the Lord Stand and lift up my hands And the joy of the Lord is our strength We bow down and worship him now

Our name and how awesome is he Together we sing Everyone sing For the Lord of God Almighty The earth is filled with his glory Holy is the Lord God Almighty The earth is filled with his glory The earth is filled with his glory We stand in the cup of hands The joy of the Lord is our strength We bow down and worship him now How great, how awesome is he Together we sing Everyone sing

[ 62 : 24 ] Holy is the Lord God Almighty The earth is filled with his glory Holy is the Lord God Almighty The earth is filled with his glory The earth is filled with his glory It's rising up All around It's the anthem of the Lord's renown It's rising up All around It's the anthem of the Lord's renown And that we sing And that we sing Everyone sing All around All around Holy is the Lord God Almighty The earth is filled with his glory

Holy is the Lord God Almighty The earth is filled with his glory The earth is filled with his glory The earth is filled with his glory Holy is the Lord Please be seated You feel the endorphins shooting?

You see, when we worship God, we're supposed to be celebrating We're supposed to be filled with the joy of the Lord Amen? Amen Because it's a celebration of the incredible blessing of having God in our lives So often, we let all these negative voices, all these painful stories, all these other people of sadness and despair creep into our lives And we start living for the brokenness And we wonder why our lives become filled with despair and hurt That's a sin That's a brokenness between us and God That we need to confess And we need to be forgiven So let's turn our prayers over to God Dear God in heaven I have sinned By some of the things I do By some of the things I don't do And by some of the things I don't do Forgive me, Lord Forgive me for giving up hope Forgiving up joy

Forgetting you And not being what I'm supposed to be And not being what I'm supposed to be Make me your instrument Help me to celebrate your joy Help me to celebrate your joy Your blessing Your presence in my life Your presence in my life And eternity for all eternity For it's in Jesus' name we pray For it's in Jesus Christ Amen In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven In the name of Jesus Christ Your sins are forgiven Glory to God Amen Amen I love the world You shut down into darkness

Open my eyes Let me see Beauty that made this heart adore you Hope of all life spent with you So here I am to worship Here I am to bow down Here I am to say that you're my God You're altogether lovely Altogether worldly Altogether wonderful to me King of all faith So highly infronted Glorious in heaven above

[ 66 : 56 ] Hungry you came to the earth You created All for love's sake Be careful So here I am to worship Here I am to bow down Here I am to say that you're my God Altogether lovely Altogether worthy Altogether wonderful to me And I'll never know how much it costs To see my sin upon that cross And I'll never know how much it costs To see my sin upon that cross

Here I am to worship Here I am to worship Here I am to bow down Here I am to say that you're my God Altogether lovely Altogether lovely Altogether wonderful to me Here I am to worship And the great God we worship has invited us to come to the table To rejoice in knowing that God has made a way for us to come into his presence That God has made a way for all of us to receive everything God has for us All of the blessing All of the joy That God has promised us

Made covenant to be our sovereign God And spoke to us through your prophets Who looked for that day When justice shall roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream When nations shall not lift up sword against nations Neither shall they learn war anymore And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven We praise your name and join their unending hymn Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might Heaven and earth are full of your glory Hosanna in the highest Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord Hosanna in the highest Holy are you and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ Whom you sent in the fullness of time To be a light to the nations You scatter the crowd in the imaginations of their hearts And have mercy on those who fear you

[ 72:03 ] When the supper was over He took the cup and gave you thanks and praise And he gave it to his disciples He said drink from this all of you This is the cup of my blood The blood of the new covenant Poured out for you And is poured out for many For the forgiveness of sin Do this as often as you drink it In remembrance of me And so in remembrance of these Your mighty acts in Jesus Christ We offer ourselves In praise and thanksgiving As a holy and living sacrifice In union with Christ's offering for us As we proclaim the mystery of faith Christ has died Christ is risen Christ will come again Pour out your Holy Spirit on us Gathered here And on these gifts of bread and wine Make them be for us

[illegible]

And now God invites you, you, particularly you, to the table of the Lord. Whoever you are, wherever you come from, God himself wants you to feel and experience his joy.

[ 76 : 07 ] You're welcome at the table. The blessing that God gives to us. Come to the table, pray out for prayers for healing, to light a candle. Come and join us with the Lord. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 78 : 47 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

You see, when you say joy or you say rejoice, you've got to smile. It has to happen. Say rejoice. Say joy. Can you feel the anticipation?

We're going to go into overtime here. Now, this is like a football game. It's like extra innings, but it's worth it because the end is the end, and it's going to be great. It's going to be great. Are you ready? It's going in spring Her teeth and every heart Prepare him through And heaven and nature sing And heaven and nature sing And heaven and nature sing

[ 81 : 30 ] Joy to the world, the Savior brings Let all their songs employ The fields and floods, rocks, hills and waves Repeat the sounding joy Repeat the sounding joy Repeat, repeat the sounding joy No more let sins and sorrows grow Nor thorns invest the ground He comes to make His blessings flow Far as the curse is found Far as the curse is found Far as, far as the curse is found

He rules the world with truth and grace And makes the nations grow The glories of His righteousness And wonders of His love And wonders of His love And wonders, wonders of His love Better than the tailgate party He's got you pumped and ready to go Now go out and live to the joy That God puts in your soul Live in it And don't let anybody take away your joy As God holds you in the palm of His hand Go in His peace Amen Thank you.