

LET THERE BE JOY

BIG IDEA

Our discomfort is never the end of the story with Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

Have someone in your group read aloud Luke 2:4-20.

OPENER

On a scale of one to ten, what is your joy meter this Christmas season (and why)?

QUESTIONS

1. Put yourself in Mary's shoes as she discovers there is not room in the inn and she has to give birth in a barn surrounded by animals. What are you thinking and feeling?
2. John told us to treasure the present moments, even if you're not as comfortable as you'd like. Share a time when you have faced discomfort but were able to treasure the blessings in the moment.
3. If you only focus on the straw or hay, you'll miss what God is doing right now. Are you more likely to think about all the "bad" of a situation, or do you think about how God may be working?
4. We should also direct our thoughts to how God is working around us. As you move through your life, the things you ponder are the very things that shape you. How does this principle apply when you are directing your thoughts to dwell on how God is working? In contrast, what happens when you focus on how you are feeling?
5. The sermon talked about guarding your intake (e.g., social media), listening to worship music, and reading scripture. Discuss how these kinds of practices have helped or hindered you in the past? How might you apply these ideas this Christmas season to help you experience joy?
6. We should set our hope on future joy. Share a time when you have experienced the lifting of your spirit from the joy of others.
7. The sermon mentioned how important it is to gather with people who are celebrating what God is doing as it can bring you joy. What steps can you take this Christmas season to gather with people who are celebrating God's activity? Who might need you to invite them to gather?

TAKEAWAY

How can you feel the joy when pain or busyness seems to hold you captive? The three ways to experience God's joy no matter your circumstances:

1. Treasure the moments even if you're not as comfortable as you'd like to be
2. Ponder how God will continue working to heal the world
3. Gather people around you who are celebrating God's activity

REFERENCES

Luke 2:4-20

Phil 4:11-12

John 16:33

Col: 3:2

Heb 12:28

Psalm 28:7

DIGGING DEEPER

1. In Hebrews 10:24, the writer admonishes us to "motivate one another to acts of love and good works." In verse 25 he reminds us, "do not neglect our meeting together, but encourage one another..." How do these verses coincide with the message of joy? Has your joy been affected by the body of Christ? How?
2. In this context, why is it better to be directly involved in His Kingdom work rather than just hear about it?
3. In Philippians 4:11-12 Paul talks about how he has learned to be content in all situations. What does it take to separate from the challenges around you in order to attain this state of peace (contentment)?
4. We are hoping for a savior who can heal the flu and give us a trip to Disney. Meanwhile our Savior can heal all death and carry us to immortal ecstasy. Read 1 Cor 2:9 and Rev 21:4. How do these verses expand your future hope into an eternal perspective?
5. In this life there will be very trying times. Read John 16:33 and Lamentations 3:22. Discuss how these verses help you to focus on "future joy."