



Boulder Week 2 | Erie Week 3: **JOY**

The theme for this week is *joy*. Like all of our themes in this Advent series, it's a word that we hear often, but may experience scarcely if we seek after it according to the world's terms. If you're in Boulder, this falls in week 2 of our Advent series. If you're in Erie, it's week 3. May we all be reminded of what true joy is and how to find it!

Connect

1. What words or ideas come to mind when you think of the word, *joy*?
2. Who are the joyful people in your life? What do you see in them that you would identify as *joy*?
3. What did you find most significant from last Sunday's sermon?

Understand

1. Read Psalm 16. The last verse declares, "*in your presence there is fullness of joy.*" What reasons, ideas, or attitudes are expressed in these 11 verses that relate to experiencing God's presence?
2. Several verses in Psalm 16 describe David's decisions or attitudes toward the LORD that relate to his experience of God's presence and, ultimately, joy. Try to identify the phrases in Psalm 16 where these decisions or attitudes are described.
3. Read Luke 2:1-20. According to the angel, why is this declaration "good news of great joy"? How is this related to the idea of *presence* that we saw in Psalm 16:11?
4. What, if anything, do you see in the shepherds' response to the news that relates back to Psalm 16?

Apply

1. What has your experience of joy been like this past year?



2. What messages does our culture tell us about (1) what joy is and (2) where it comes from? How do these messages compare with what God's Word says about joy?
3. Joy is included as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, which relates well to the claim that joy is found in God's presence. What kinds of things rob you from the experience of joy through God's Spirit? What kinds of things spur it on?
4. As we remember the birth of Jesus, Immanuel ("God with us"), how can the anticipation of His return also lead us to live with joy in the present?
5. It's common to think of joy as a byproduct of life's circumstances. In the Bible, though, joy (often as "rejoice") is presented as a command (e.g., Psalm 95:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Philippians 4:4). What would it look like for us to be a community of people who *choose* to live with joy in Christ rather than being dependent on certain "joyful" conditions?