



December, 19, 2019

## Joy

*The angel said to [the shepherds], "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people." **Luke 2:10***

Joy is a deep-seated sense of well-being, of safety in God's universe. But some of us have difficulty opening ourselves to the joy of the Lord when we feel surrounded by suffering. We feel as though we must engage with the pain around us, but we forget to embrace the joy. We find ourselves distrustful, suspicious, and even resistant to the possibilities of experiencing the joy found in Jesus Christ.

And perhaps we have good reason for our reluctance. We have been badly hurt and let down in the past. We know that life can be terribly unfair, and maybe we struggle with a disposition that leans toward despair rather than hope. Perhaps we are scared that if we open ourselves to joy, we will face disappointment. Whatever the reason, we may find ourselves fearing joy. Little wonder that the angel, when bringing the shepherds good news of great joy, tells them not to be afraid.

Advent invites us to overcome our fear and to receive the joy that Jesus brings. Not only is he a man filled with great joy, but also he wants to share that joy with us. His joy, so evident in his life, is not blind to the presence of suffering, evil, and death. Jesus faces these realities head-on. The joy that he offers has been tested by everything that so often robs us of ours. Because of Jesus' life, crucifixion, and resurrection, we can trust that his joy is stronger than all its opponents. What keeps us from experiencing joy? May we be willing to release our fears and allow the joy of Jesus into our hearts and minds.

**Practice:** *Make a conscious effort today to rejoice in the good gifts that come your way—a warm cup of coffee, the friendly face of a loved one, the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. Receive God's gift of joy in these moments.*

*Note: This devotional was written by Trevor Hudson. Trevor is a dear friend who has a collection of devotionals for Advent titled, **Pauses for Advent: Words of Wonder***