

# Happiness or Joy?

## I. The Question We Ask at Christmas

- We often focus on *what makes us happy*: gifts, food, time off, experiences.
- A deeper and more difficult question: **What makes us joyful?**
- The Bible does not promise constant happiness—but it does promise lasting joy.

## II. Biblical Happiness: Blessed by Trusting God

- In Scripture, *happy* and *blessed* are often linked (Psalms, Beatitudes).
- Biblical happiness is not about getting what we want, but about trusting God.
- Happiness reacts to circumstances.

## III. Biblical Joy: Found Even in Suffering

- Joy appears frequently in contexts of loss, struggle, and trial.
- **Habakkuk 3**: Rejoicing despite devastation.
- **James 1 & Romans 5**: Trials don't just accompany joy—they help produce it.
- Joy rests in relationship with God, not in favorable outcomes.
- Jesus' birth shows that God enters our suffering rather than avoiding it.

## IV. Naming Our “Habakkuk Moments”

- We translate ancient struggles into modern realities.
- Personal and communal challenges can still be followed by faithful rejoicing.
- “Though... YET I will rejoice in the Lord.”

## V. Emmanuel: The Source of Lasting Joy

- God is with us in every season—especially in suffering.
- Joy is possible because God listens, loves, and remains present.
- Even death does not defeat God's promise of life and hope.

## VI. A Christmas Invitation

- You may not feel happy this season—and that's okay.
- You are invited to receive joy grounded in Christ's presence and promises.
- Joy comes from knowing Emmanuel: God with us.

## Reflection Questions

1. When you think about happiness, what circumstances usually affect it most in your life?
2. How would you describe the difference between happiness and joy in your own words?

3. Which Scripture from the sermon (Psalm 1, Psalm 32, Habakkuk 3:17-18, James 1:2-3, Romans 5:3-5, Matthew 5:3-4) stood out to you most, and why?
4. Read Habakkuk 3:17-18. What are three “Though...” situations you are facing right now in your life?
5. How does knowing that God entered suffering through Jesus shape how you view your struggles?
6. In what ways have you experienced joy even when happiness felt out of reach?
7. What would it look like for you to practice rejoicing in God this week, regardless of circumstances?