

## SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE:

## Believe/Belong/Become

**December 14, 2025**

**Series:** Christmas Advent

**Week 3** — JOY

**Passage:** Luke 2:1–15

**Bottom Line:** Joy is not often a default response, but the good news of Jesus calls Christians to live with joy—chosen through practice and nurtured through proximity to Jesus.

### **“Do Not Be Afraid”**

**Read: Luke 2:1–10**

**Key Idea:** Fear is the most common command addressed in Scripture, because fear blocks joy. The arrival of Jesus replaces fear with “good news of great joy for all the people.”

**Discuss:**

- **Why do you think “*Do not be afraid*” is the most frequent command in the Bible?**
- **Where do fear, anxiety, or discouragement most easily steal your joy?**
- **How does the angel’s announcement reframe the shepherds’ moment—and your own moments of fear?**
- **What might it look like to practice resisting fear as part of choosing joy?**

**Read: Luke 2:11**

**Key Idea:** The “good news” (gospel) is the announcement of a King—Jesus the Messiah, the Lord. This is the beginning of the new age, the in-breaking of God’s kingdom. Joy is the natural result of hearing and believing this good news.

**Discuss:**

- **How does understanding the gospel as “the announcement of a King” deepen your sense of joy?**
- **The angel promises “great (massive) joy for all people.” What makes this news so joyful?**
- **Which part of the gospel do you tend to focus on—and what part do you tend to forget?**
- **How might joy be an act of defiance or resistance in a cynical world?**

**Read: Philippians 4:4–8**

**Key Idea:** Joy is not only something we feel—it is something we choose. We cultivate joy by practice (habits that form us) and by proximity (remaining close to the joyful presence of Jesus).

**Discuss:**

- **What practices help you choose joy rather than drift into negativity or fear?**
- **How have you seen serving, gratitude, or meditation on Scripture shape joy in your life?**
- **How does closeness to Jesus—“in His presence is fullness of joy”—give joy a source deeper than circumstances?**
- **Where do you sense an invitation this Advent to reorder habits or draw closer to Jesus? Practically, if you started an Advent devotional or routine, how is it going? What is stopping you from restarting or finishing strong?**

**Read: Luke 2:15**

**Key Idea:** Joy spreads. The shepherds were compelled to move, see, tell, and worship. Joy becomes complete when it is expressed and shared with others.

**Discuss:**

- **Why do you think joy naturally wants to be shared?**
- **Who around you needs to hear or see the joy of Jesus through you this season?**
- **What small step of obedience might help you embody joy this week?**
- **How can your group help each other resist cynicism and cultivate joy together?**

#### **LEADERS' NOTE: OPTIONAL CONTENT**

*As you think about continuing to help your group take steps of spiritual growth as disciples, here is a more direct set of questions that surround the three words we use to talk about a growing disciple of Jesus:*

#### **BELIEVE —**

What truth about joy, the gospel, or Jesus corrects, informs, or deepens your biblical understanding?

#### **BELONG —**

What aspect of choosing joy can only be sustained in community?

How can this group help you resist individualism and grow in joy together?

#### **BECOME —**

What is one way you will practice or live out joy this week—a habit, choice, or step that naturally flows from your renewed belief?