



## **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (JOY)**

**Sunday, December 15, 2013**

**Guest Writer for This Unit:** Brian Bantum, Lectionary Team Member

The unit you are viewing, Third Sunday in Advent (Joy), is a compact unit. This means that it is not a complete commentary of the Scripture(s) selected for this day on the calendar, nor does it have a full, supporting cultural resource unit and worship unit. Instead, to enliven the imagination of preachers and teachers, we have provided a sermonic outline, songs, suggested books, and suggested articles, links, and videos. For additional information, see Advent in the archives of the Lectionary for 2009–2012.

### **I. Description of the Liturgical Moment**

Week Three of Advent shifts from the expectation of peace to the theme of joy. Joy encompasses the preceding weeks with hope and peace as postures of expectancy, as we wait with Mary for what God will do and what God has done. Moving into the third week of Advent, joy marks the celebration of fulfillment, that what we are expecting has come and that cups that were empty are now full. The heart of this joy is the arrival of the child, Jesus, who has come to answer the yearning of Israel, but in his coming has done even more than we could have imagined. This Sunday is a time of remembering what is hoped for and a celebration that what is hoped for has come, even as we wait for the Lord's return.

With this material as our backdrop, we provide a sermonic outline for Advent Week Three (Joy).

### **II. Advent Week Three (Joy): Sermonic Outline**

#### **A. Sermonic Focus Text(s):** Isaiah 9:6-7 (New Revised Standard Version)

(v. 6) For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his

kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

## **B. Possible Titles**

- i. Joy Comes in the Morning
- ii. Rejoice! Light Has Come
- iii. Remembering What Was Behind and Looking Toward What Has Come

## **C. Point of Exegetical Inquiry**

In any text, there can be several words or phrases that require significant exegetical inquiry. One exegetical inquiry raised by this text is the definition of the word joy. For purposes of today's text and the sermon theme (joy), joy is defined as *the emotion reached when believers remember where we were and the realization of what has happened to us and for us because of Christ. In Christ, hope and peace has become flesh and so we rejoice!*

## **III. Introduction**

In the context of Isaiah, this passage points to the significant yearning of Israel and their hope for God's intervention into their midst. The earliest followers of Jesus would come to see Jesus as the child who would bring endless peace. Christ's coming is the coming of a peace that endures even in the face of the most difficult and unjust circumstances. The coming of peace is the beginning of joy and or the ability to express joy. The joy birthed in Christ is the real presence of God in the world—God joined God's self to the very real, confused, and often-painful conditions of our lives in order to make us all whole.

## **IV. Moves/Points**

**Move/Point One – Joy arises from remembering the reality of our condition (past and present).** Joy is the fulfillment of hope and is made possible when we remember the instability, fear, or guilt of our former life and see the unstable made stable, the fear answered, and our guilt forgiven. We do not gloss over the difficulty. As did Israel, we remember.

- a. Remembering dislocation, Isaiah is speaking from a context where Israel has been taken from their homeland.
- b. Israel is in this dislocated space because they sought security and hope in gods that had no power. In what ways do we seek security in the gods of this world? We must remember the ways that we are unfaithful in order to find the peace of the child born to us.
- c. Israel is yearning to be made whole, and the desire for the Prince of Peace is a yearning for protection and well-being in a dangerous land.

## **Move/Point Two – What is this joy? Who is this one who brings joy?**

- a. Joy is the profound recognition of what has been endured and what is now found. More than happiness or enjoyment, joy is not a momentary or fleeting pleasurable experience. Joy is the deep sense of being brought back home after enduring weeks, months, or years of estrangement and isolation. But even more joy arises in the realization that this rest is secure.
- b. While Israel's hope lay in a Davidic king whose life would create a political and social peace, Jesus' birth is the coming of a peace that has its roots in the very beginning of time and the end of time. In Christ's birth we are invited to rest in the home of our Creator's body and love.
- c. Joy comes in one who has authority. His authority is not an authority that is given to him, but an authority that is part of his identity. The one who creates all things comes to us.

## **Move/Point Three – What does it mean to live into joy when times are not so joyful?**

- a. Israel's cries were to a God who had promised to be present to them and had fulfilled those promises in Christ. Even when they believed themselves to be lost, God did not cease to see them and their plight.
- b. Along with Israel, we are still living into a realization of what contentment and joy looks like.
- c. The joy that we yearn for in Christ is grounded in a life of worship and a life of service and love to one another. A son is born to us signals to us that we are reborn and that God is working out God's promises through God's people.

## **V. Celebration**

The joy of knowing that the one who is responsible for our beginning and end has come to us and allows us to be free to encourage, support, and be God's presence to others. We celebrate what has come and exalt the One who is present with us now and will be present to us even in our darkest moments. This certainty of God's presence is the source of our joy, joy unspeakable.

## **VI. Sounds, Sights, and Colors in This Passage**

- Sounds:** The sounds of a child crying and a mother's soothing/singing;
- Sights:** A gathering of family surrounding the newborn child; family celebrating the arrival of a long-awaited child;
- Colors:** A beige straw crib; a light blue baby blanket; and purple, the color of royalty.

(v. 6) For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His

authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

## **VII. Illustration(s) and Quotes - JOY**

### **A Disturbing Dance**

CNN featured a story about how a poor, black woman saved enough money to purchase herself a home in Silicon Valley. She loved her new home. She kept the inside clean and the lawn mowed. In an effort to get unwanted people out of the neighborhood, the neighborhood association got together with the local bank and established a law that allowed a home to be foreclosed if the owner did not pay their association dues. For some reason or another, the black lady did not pay her \$200 dues. As a result, the bank foreclosed on her house and sold her house which was worth over \$100,000 for \$10,000 to two white lawyers. The new owners threw her stuff out the doors and windows into the yard. She became homeless and had no place to go.

Though she was homeless, CNN showed the woman in church that Sunday praising God; she still had joy. She danced up a storm. She danced until Heaven got disturbed and disturbed the minds of nine brilliant lawyers. The lawyers took her cause to court and they got her property restored.

Whatever the situation, when you can't do anything else, you praise the Lord. Heaven can decipher what you need and take it from there.

—Charles Adams,  
from the sermon “Why Praise the Lord”

This is the true joy in life, the being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one: the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap heap, and being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy.

—George Bernard Shaw,  
(quoted in Jon Johnston, Courage: You Can Stand Strong in the Face of Fear)

A woman sees a father shopping with a fussy two-year-old in his grocery cart. “Be patient, Billy,” he whispers. “You can handle this, Billy. It’s okay, Billy.”

The woman said to him, “I don’t mean to interrupt your shopping, but I just had to tell you how wonderfully loving and patient you are with little Billy.”

The man replied, “Actually, my son’s name is Patrick. My name is Billy.”

The Spirit is available to whisper to us thoughts of love and joy and peace and patience every moment of our life. Right now. All we have to do is stop, ask, and listen.

—J. Ortberg, The me i want to be

## **VIII. Songs to Accompany This Commentary**

### **A. Hymn(s)**

- Angels We Have Heard on High. Text: Les anges dans nos campagnes. Tune, (GLORIA), French Traditional
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee. By Henry van Dyke. Tune, (HYMN TO JOY), by Ludwig van Beethoven and Edward Hodges

### **B. Modern Song(s)**

- Still Have Joy. By Tye Tribbett
- Joy Will. By Charles Jenkins

### **C. Congregational Song(s)**

- I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy. Text and Tune, (I'VE GOT THE JOY), by George W. Cooke
- This Is the Day. Text: Psalm 118:24. Tune by Les Garrett
- Joy Unspeakable. Text and Tune by Barney E. Warren

### **D. Gospel Song(s) for Choirs, Ensembles, or Praise Teams**

- My Joy. By John P. Kee and Tye Tribbett
- Joy. By Kirk Franklin
- Exceeding Joy. By Miriam Webster

### **E. Song(s) or Instrumental(s) for the Offertory Period**

- This Joy. By Tracy Shy
- Joy. By Walter Hawkins
- Joy to the World. By Isaac Watts and Lowell Mason

### **F. Song(s) or Instrumental(s) for the Period of Prayer**

- Blessed Quietness. By Marie P. Ferguson. Tune, (BLESSED QUIETNESS), by W. S. Marshall

- Center of My Joy. Text and Tune by Richard Smallwood, William Gaither, and Gloria Gaither
- God Is. Text and Tune by Robert J. Fryson

## G. Invitational Song(s)

- Come to Jesus. Traditional. Tune, (COME TO JESUS).
- Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling. Text and Tune, (THOMPSON), by Will L. Thompson
- If You Want Joy, Real Joy. Text and Tune by Joseph D. Carlson

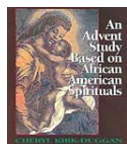
## H. Song(s) of Benediction or Sending Forth

- Go, Tell It on the Mountain. Negro Spiritual and John W. Work, Jr. Tune, (GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN), Negro Spiritual
- Always Remember. Text and Tune by Andraé Crouch
- Let the Church Say Amen. By Andraé Crouch

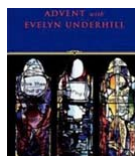
## IX. Books to Assist in Preparing Sermons or Bible Studies Related to Advent



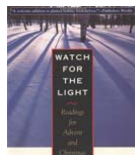
Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. God Is in the Manger: Reflections on Advent and Christmas. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2012.



Kirk-Duggan, Cheryl A. Mary Had a Baby: An Advent Study Based on African American Spirituals (Student and Leader Guides). Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003.



Underhill, Evelyn, and Christopher Webber. Advent with Evelyn Underhill. Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 2006.



Various Authors. Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004.

## **X. Notes for Select Songs**

### **A. Hymn(s)**

- Angels We Have Heard on High. Text: Les anges dans nos campagnes. Tune, (GLORIA), French Traditional  
Location:  
Church of God in Christ. Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. Memphis, TN: Church of God in Christ Pub. Board in association with the Benson Co., 1982. #207
- Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee. By Henry van Dyke. Tune, (HYMN TO JOY), by Ludwig van Beethoven and Edward Hodges  
Location:  
The United Methodist Hymnal. Nashville, TN: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1989. #89

### **B. Modern Song(s)**

- Still Have Joy. By Tye Tribbett  
Location:  
Tribbett, Tye and Greater Anointing. Victory Live. New York, NY: Sony/BMG Records, 2006.
- Joy Will. By Charles Jenkins  
Location:  
Jenkins, Charles and Fellowship Chicago. The Best of Both Worlds. Chicago, IL: Inspired People, 2012.

### **C. Congregational Song(s)**

- I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy. Text and Tune, (I'VE GOT THE JOY), by George W. Cooke  
Location:  
African American Heritage Hymnal. Chicago, IL: GIA Publications, 2001. #622
- This Is The Day. Text: Psalm 118:24. Tune by Les Garrett  
Location:  
African American Heritage Hymnal. #108
- Joy Unspeakable. Text and Tune by Barney E. Warren  
Location:  
Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #475

### **D. Gospel Song(s) for Choirs, Ensembles, or Praise Teams**

- My Joy. By John P. Kee and Tye Tribbett

Location:

Tribbett, Tye and Greater Anointing. Life. New York, NY: Sony/Columbia Records, 2004.

- Joy. By Kirk Franklin

Location:

Georgia Mass Choir. I Sing Because I'm Happy. Jackson, MS: Savoy/Malaco Records, 1992.

- Exceeding Joy. By Miriam Webster

Location:

Hillsong. Hope. Sydney, New South Wales, Australia: Hillsong Music, 2003.

#### **E. Song(s) or Instrumental(s) for the Offertory Period**

- This Joy. By Tracy Shy

Location:

Evans, David G. Bishop David G. Evans Presents Automatic Praise: Live. Lindenwold, NJ: Abundant Harvest, 2008.

- Joy. By Walter Hawkins

Location:

Hawkins, Walter and The Love Center Choir. Love Alive V: 25th Anniversary Reunion. Inglewood, CA: Gospocentric Records, 1998.

- Joy to the World. By Isaac Watts and Lowell Mason

Location:

Hutchins, Norman and JDI Christmas. Emmanuel. Los Angeles, CA: JDI Records, 2001.

#### **F. Song(s) or Instrumental(s) for the Period of Prayer**

- Blessed Quietness. By Marie P. Ferguson. Tune, (BLESSED QUIETNESS), by W. S. Marshall

Location:

The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. Nashville, TN: Triad Publications, 2005. #122

- Center of My Joy. Text and Tune by Richard Smallwood, William Gaither, and Gloria Gaither

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #491

- God Is. Text and Tune by Robert J. Fryson

Location:

African American Heritage Hymnal. #134



### **G. Invitational Song(s)**

- Come to Jesus. Traditional. Tune, (COME TO JESUS).  
Location:  
The New National Baptist Hymnal 21st Century Edition. #182
- Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling. Text and Tune, (THOMPSON), by Will L. Thompson  
Location:  
African American Heritage Hymnal. #347
- If You Want Joy, Real Joy. Text and Tune by Joseph D. Carlson  
Location:  
Yes, Lord! Church of God in Christ Hymnal. #301

### **H. Song(s) of Benediction or Sending Forth**

- Go, Tell It on the Mountain. Negro Spiritual and John W. Work, Jr. Tune, (GO TELL IT ON THE MOUNTAIN), Negro Spiritual  
Location:  
The United Methodist Hymnal. #251
- Always Remember. Text and tune by Andraé Crouch  
Location:  
African American Heritage Hymnal. #640
- Let The Church Say Amen. By Andraé Crouch  
Location:  
The Journey. Sherman Oaks, CA: Riverphlo Entertainment, 2011.