

## The Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday November 13 2020

### Children's Message:

This morning we focus or think about Joy. The third candle in our Advent wreath represents Joy. This candle is the pink one. It is different from the other three. The Joy candle reminds us that we are more than half way through Advent and closer to Christmas. When I was your age, I remember my mom talking to me about colours and their importance at various times of the year. The Christmas colours were red and green. The Halloween colours were black and orange. The Easter colours were purple and pink. Why would the colours of our Advent wreath candles be the same as the colours of Easter? Tell me what you think.

Joy is like a happiness that lasts over a long period of time. Sometimes it is hours, days or even years. The amazing thing is that the joy never grows old or stale or boring. It always makes you happy. It is like going to your happy place and never leaving. Find those things in life that give you Joy. They can be a job, an activity, spending time with certain people.

As we get closer to Christmas, people are starting to do those things that bring them Joy. They are cleaning their homes, looking for the right tree, looking at recipes and thinking about what to cook over Christmas. People are looking for the right gift to give to those they love. So that it will bring Joy to the hearts of those people who receive it. Christmas is all about Joy and how we create it and spread it in our

world. The reason we spread the Joy so thick at this time of year is because of the Joy that the birth of the Baby Jesus brought to us. So spread the Joy of Jesus birth. That is the greatest gift in the manger.

### Adults Message:

This morning as I told the kids, we would light the pink candle. It is the odd one in the Advent wreath and for good reason. It is there to remind us or warn us that we are half way past Advent. This candle is meant to encourage us to persist onward with Advent. Do not give up now. I as mentioned to the kids, this candle is Joy.

Joy is happiness that is sustained over a long period of time. It is worth noting that only you can make yourself happy. There will be people around you who may contribute to your happiness. There will also be some who will try to take away your happiness. Ultimately, only you can make yourself happy. That took me years to realize, and was a valuable lesson to learn. Joy is like happiness on steroids.

This Advent I have been praying and reading more than usual. This habit has brought me much Joy. In my reading I have found some words of wisdom by Peter of Damascus on Joy. I will share some of his wisdom with you. "I remembered God and I rejoiced" Psalm 77:3. Here is what Peter had to say about this short passage. "For when the intellect is gladdened by the remembrance of God, then it forgets the afflictions of this world, places its hope in Him, and is no longer troubled or anxious. Freedom from anxiety makes it rejoice and gives thanks and the grateful offering of thanks augments the gift of grace it has received. And as the blessings increase, so does the thankfulness."

This Advent, I needed to be reminded of the powerful effects of remembering God during my daily routine. I set times for prayer at 8 and 10 AM and at noon and at 3 and 7 PM. Forcing myself to remember Him made me more aware of the blessings in my life. This was not easy at the start of Advent but the habit started to grow on me. It reminded me that He is the source of all blessings. This made me more grateful and my worries and anxieties slipped deeper into the background. My prayer routine filled me with Joy and it made rejoicing easier.

Freedom from anxiety seems to be the answer that many are craving and desiring at this time in history. I can only imagine their joy if their anxiety was to be lessened or removed. Could we actually have the answer? Making time in your day for prayer in order to remember God, to remember His blessings in your life and letting Joy wash over you. Could making time to talk to God be the answer?

In these times, I never expected to find such ancient Christian wisdom. From such an obscure individual. That Joy would be the answer to the anxiety that people are experiencing during the pandemic. I must admit, the answer does sound too easy. The proof will be in the pudding. If you take the time to talk with Him. I can tell you that the practice requires a lot of mental and physical effort. It requires us to mentally step out of our feeling of anxiety and to look at all the blessings that surround us.

Our Lord desired that we be joyful. He encouraged it in the apostles and disciples. John 15:11, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full." Our Lord's words and teachings are the source of joy for those who follow Him. When

we reflect and spend time in His words we will find Joy. We will find the fullness of Joy in scripture when we make the time for it. If you find yourself anxious this Advent, my advice is to spend some time talking with Him and reading His word. God bless and stay safe, Pastor D.