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**Advent – Joy**

I have a lot of joy in my life...No, not that kind of joy. . . this kind:



My children actually roll their eyes when we get out the Christmas deco! "Mom! Why is there so much stinking Joy around here??!!" I hear something like this every year. Well, there are a few good reasons. First of all, my middle name is Joy, so there actually is a lot of Joy in this house. 😊 My mom loves to give me things that say "joy". It fits. And, to be truthful, I am a very joyful person. So why am I finding it so hard to write this little Advent piece about Joy?

I'm guessing it's because just like the other fruit of the Spirit and Advent focused words, joy is hard to capture and hold on to. Oh, we have so many moments of it. Watching our children's faces light with excitement over something. Seeing the little cuties during services light the advent candle. Decorating the tree with all those lights. Having everyone under the same roof. Listening to our favorite songs. Seeing our favorite Christmas movie. Those little moments are wonderful and I hope you are getting some of those, but what happens if you're not? What happens if you don't get to be with the ones you love? What happens when the decorations come down? What happens if your toddler throws a fit instead of loving that gift they got? What happens when the music stops? I'm thinking of all of those things and much worse scenarios for

some of us. What happens when the pain is so deep the joy just feels gone and like it will never come back?

I don't know. The answers aren't easy or always there. This life is full of pain. It's not always well lit. Sometimes the joy seems too hidden, too far gone, too covered in grey. But...

*II Corinthians 5:17-19: Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

*Romans 5:1-2: Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.*

The word JOY is not specifically in these passages, but I cannot read this without JOY unspeakable joy rising up in my soul. Just the thought of covered sin, justification, Christ reconciling the world, Christ bringing His Peace to this world. . . what joy. The Good News brings joy immeasurable.

And then I start to hum and sing in my head.

Joy unspeakable joy, rises in my soul, never let's me go....

Joy to the world the Lord has come!

Joyful joyful we adore thee, hearts of glory....

There's a joy joy joy down in my heart...

The joy of the Lord will be my strength...

When the Peace flows in, the Joy pours out...

And then I start to sing (& cry...you probably know this about me by now...) I stand in worship with the Body, with you, and find that joy bubbling up. Joy is the coming of Christ. Joy is the anticipation of the God of all things making all things whole again. Joy is about longing for that moment and being given a taste of it here and now. Joy is what we feel when all is well. It may not actually be ALL WELL right now, but we can see it, we can glimpse it, we can feel what it will be like because our God is SO GOOD. He lets us have glimpses of it. It is HERE. It is NOW. Oh, my heart just bursts thinking about it! He's so good to me that I can feel that joy right now and it's unspeakable it's so beautiful. I don't know why, but He loves us so much that He gave us His Son and that Son's sacrifice brings us into a relationship of Peace that is full of the deepest Joy. The Spirit testifies to our spirit that we can be a joy-filled people because of the coming of baby Jesus and the next coming, and friends, that's what Advent Joy is. Advent Joy is the kind that says all may not be well with you right now, but a time is coming when all will be

well and that, that is so worth the wait. May you be filled with Advent anticipation this day. Fill your house with Joy. No, not that kind ... THIS kind:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dwK8DE2niLQ>