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Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the joy that you bring into our lives. And thank you so much for the freedom and the opportunity to come here today and to gather together in worship to remember you and to praise your name, to find joy in the midst of the difficult circumstances of this world. I ask God as I speak now that you would open up our hearts to hear only the things from you today and that you use my words to bless us and to help us grow closer to you, to fill our hearts with joy. I ask in Jesus' name, Amen. Good morning. Well, today's Advent theme, in case you hadn't picked up on it, is Joy. I think we went through every Joy song in our book, which is fantastic. I love it. We have been doing a modified version of Advent this year, but coincidentally, our third week is Joy, and that is also the traditional theme of the third week of Advent. And so, in fact, that's why sometimes you'll see an Advent wreath that has all purple candles, but one pink candle. And whereas the other weeks focus on some of the regal aspects of Jesus' nature, the pink one is for the week of Joy because it's a more joyful color. I learned that on the Internet. So, it may not be true. But this week I've been researching about Joy and reading scripture about Joy and thinking about Joy and looking for Joy. And as I've done all of this thinking and reading and researching, I came to the conclusion that all of the different types of Joy experienced by people in the world can be grouped into three different types. And I'm not saying that the Bible has three different types or that there's three different Hebrew words for Joy. I'm not saying anything like that. I'm just saying that I, Matthew Klossmeyer, have noticed three different types of Joy. And those three types are Natural Joy, Chosen Joy, and Supernatural Joy. Natural Joy is the obvious one. It's most common. You find it everywhere. Three guys walk into a bar with the fourth one ducks. It's Natural Joy. Anyway, it's the thing that you, when you're looking forward to something like a movie or going to a loved one's house, that's the Joy you feel. It's natural. It happens. Dogs have Natural Joy. It's very common. You find it everywhere. However, not everyone finds Natural Joy in the same things. One person will find Natural Joy when they're on the way to the gym. And another person will find Natural Joy when they're on their way to McDonald's. And those two conflict with each other. But whatever the source of your Natural Joy, it comes easily and it's expectant. You know when it's coming. You see it coming. It's going to happen. It's the thing that pops into your head when someone says, "What do you like?" That's your Natural Joy. Chosen Joy, it's less common, but it's still everywhere. It's in every culture. It's all over the world. Chosen Joy is when you choose to move your attitude towards joy at a time when it would seem illogical to do so. One type of Chosen Joy is Future Joy, such as when you're dieting and at the moment the dieting is unpleasant, but you focus on the Future Joy of being healthy and fit. And so you choose to be joyful in something that will be. There's also a Chosen Joy that you can find during times of trial. For example, if you crash your car, you might be, but you walk away unharmed. You can be upset that your car is crashed or you can choose that, "Hey, I'm walking away. I'm not on my way to the hospital." And you could choose to be Joy. So Chosen Joy, everyone has done Chosen Joy at some time in their life. Everyone has looked on the brighter side, looked for the silver lining. And then finally, Supernatural Joy. This one is most uncommon because it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and it only comes from Him. It is what allows missionaries to walk into hostile, cruel situations and still have love and joy and peace in their heart. I think a great example of that in the Bible is when Paul and Silas delivered the slave girl who had the spirit of divination. It is in Acts 16. If you're a Bible flipper, you can go with me. I did not get a chance to put the verses up today. I'm sorry. Acts 16, verse 23-25. And this is after the crowd grew angry that Paul and Silas took away their fortune teller's powers. They had them whipped. And it said, "When they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks." Verse 25, "But at midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them." These guys had no reason to be joyful. They were out on a mission, on their ministry, and they did what they were supposed to do. They delivered this girl, but then they got whipped and thrown in the deepest, darkest part of the prison in shackles, and yet they were joyfully singing hymns to God at midnight. I think it said midnight. Yes, it did. So that is supernatural joy. It's something deep and it's from the Holy Spirit. And so the three types of joy are natural, chosen, and supernatural. And in this season we say, "Joy to the world." And why do we say that? Because Jesus Christ causes natural joy. He is our chosen joy, and he gives us supernatural joy. He causes natural joy. He is our chosen joy, and he gives us supernatural joy. Let's talk about those three. He causes natural joy. I was actually going to skim over this part because it just kind of seems obvious. You know, "He just died in our place. Our sins are forgiven. You all nod and agree." Yes, that's a reason to be joyful. But sometimes this most obvious joy seems to slip away from us. Sometimes we start to read our Bible and it just becomes a chore. Or we stand in here and we sing songs and we just kind of get distracted thinking about lunch or whatever's work. It just becomes a duty. We stop doing the things that we're doing for joy and we start doing them just for work because we think it's expected of us. Maybe you have a hard time getting out of bed Sunday morning or maybe you realize, "Oh, it's my month to be usher," and you're like, "Ugh," or "Monthly meal," or whatever. And it just becomes a chore. So where's the joy? Because Jesus is a reason for joy. When you share the gospel with a Muslim, there is - I just got this from my dad this week. When you share the gospel with a Muslim, there is a common reaction that they will be happy that they're saved, but then they will start to get angry at you and say, "Why didn't you share this good news with me sooner? What if I had died? This is the most important thing you could ever tell me. You should have told me sooner." And have we forgotten how wonderful the news is? Because it really is. Have we forgotten the filth and the repugnance of our sin and how we were under a death sentence and that there was absolutely nothing we could do to save ourselves? Have we forgotten that the perfect Son of God had to come down and be whipped and beaten and mocked and stripped naked and hung on a cross and tortured to death? For us, we weren't worth it. I mean, none of the good stuff you ever did made God say, "Ooh, I've got to have that one." It doesn't work like that. We were enemies of God, but He chose to love us and that is a great reason for joy. You didn't deserve to be saved and He does not deserve one more rote heartless hymn to come off your lips that doesn't not come from a heart of joy. He deserves better than anything you could ever give Him, so the least you can do is give Him your best. How can you not have joy when you step back and you put it all in perspective? Isaiah 53, verse 5, we've been reading it a lot up here lately so you may remember, "That He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, a chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." This is the beautiful truth and it should fill you with joy. If it doesn't fill you with joy, there's a chance that you've forgotten who you are and where you came from and why you stand in the place you stand today. I encourage you to take the time and reevaluate yourself. Just look at your life through God's eyes and just begin to stand in awe of the majesty and the wonder of where you've been brought through no fault of your own. Now as I said before, not everyone finds natural joy in the same things and whereas we find joy in this good news of Jesus, not everyone will. Obviously some people simply don't believe that Jesus is who we believe Him to be and so for them He's no reason to be joyful. And some people think that religion is evil, all religion is evil and that since Jesus is part of a religion then therefore He's not a reason to be joyful about. Other people suspect Jesus is who He says He is but they don't want to disrupt their life. They are happy living in sin and they don't want to come face to face with the truth. So Jesus makes them uncomfortable and does not bring them joy. But if you're a Christian, if you've placed your faith in Christ, He should be a reason for joy and the reason that you come to church Sunday morning or any morning or any evening, the reason you sing songs and the reason you open your Bible and the reason you pray should be joy. Jesus was the Son of God, the good and loving King who lived the life that we couldn't live, died the death that we deserved to die. He took our sin and deserves all our glory and honor and praise. Jesus is our chosen joy. There are plenty of good reasons for joylessness. There is poverty and there is sickness and there is loss. And even someone like me who doesn't even look at the news has heard about the tragedy that took place this week. Unfortunately, God is not ready to take us home yet. It is His desire to take us out of this fallen, terrible world. But He knows that the day that that happens, anyone not found in Christ, is not going to be brought home and He wants more people to join the family. And if you are tired of this world and it's heartache, then the best thing you can do to cure that is to bring more people to Christ because the sooner we bring that number in, the sooner we can all get out of here. Amen. We must persist until that happens. We must live in this world. We must face what is here. Several years ago, I went to the funeral of a six-year-old. I was very smiley and churchy when I walked in, but by the end of it, I was crying harder than I had ever cried in my life because six-year-olds aren't supposed to die. Parents aren't supposed to bury their children. We are not supposed to suffer the loss of loved ones. Our bodies are not supposed to get weak and old and decay and die. We have a perfect God who created a perfect world and put perfect humans into it and we messed it all up. Romans, chapter 5, verse 12, says, the first part says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because all sinned." It's our fault. We messed it up. It was a good place to be and it's not now and it's because of us. You cannot live in this world without being visited by the joy robber. At some point or another, it will happen. Jesus is our chosen joy. First Corinthians, chapter 15, verses 54 and 55, we start down at the end of 54, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" When we lose these battles in life, we as Christians can always remember that we're on the side that will win the war. I will see my young friend again. He will not suffer from the disabilities that he suffered in this life. He will be able to speak and think clearly and the dark days of our life on this world will be as distant and forgotten as the time that you and I spent in our mother's wounds. That's what we look forward to in Christ and that's what it means that Christ is our greatest joy. But we live in a nation of complainers. We have an overblown sense of entitlement and this world in which we live tells you to focus on the bad things. It says, "How can you be thinking about the joy in the future when there's misery right now?" Have you ever heard the phrase, "First World Problems?" It's what someone says when they're complaining about something that they know they shouldn't be complaining about. It's when there's something wrong in your rich and lavish lifestyle. Some examples I found on the internet are, "I hate having to get dressed to pay the gardener so that I don't look like I'm lazy." "I can't find the right balance between my fan and my electric blanket." "I don't have enough chips for my dip but if I open another bag of chips I'll have too many chips for my dip." These are examples of first world problems. You've got to look at the big picture. There are people in the world who are starving and freezing to death who could eat for a month on what you pay for a bag of chips in this country. We've got to take a step back from that. In the evenings on our network news shows you get those editorial news shows that are less about facts and more about opinions. Those shows are fueled by our nation's complaining spirit. People would not tune in if they just reported that some turnip truck turned over on the highway. They want to see people get in there and argue for or against whatever we are for or against. We just had this whole thing about the 99% movement. We have people out there in designer jeans tweeting on their $100 a month cell phone plans about how underprivileged and unfortunate they are. I'm not saying that there's not corruption in the world but I'm saying that look at the big picture. Step back. We're also a nation of worry which I'm sure we all got a very big dose of during this recent elections. I'm pretty sure both campaign platform was if you vote for that guy terrible things will happen. All the debates and everything can just be boiled down to that. We have troops in that country but bad things will happen. If we don't have troops in that country bad things will happen. We worry and we complain. Is any wonder that we have our nation has the second highest depression rate in the world? There is a correlation not necessarily causation but a correlation between how wealthy a country is and how depressed it is. We are a Quaker church and one of the tenets of Quakerism is a life of simplicity. Quakers choose simplicity not because it's commanded in the Bible but because we want to demonstrate to the world that all of that stuff that that world is running after will never bring you happiness. We want to show the world that with just nothing but Jesus we still have everything we need and we can live content peaceful joy filled lives. That's especially important during this shopping season. Death does not equal happiness. Jesus equals happiness. So the next time you start to complain or worry or get irritated or frustrated take a step back and say to yourself Jesus still sits at the right hand of God the right hand of God the Father and I am in him. There is nothing in this world that can be done to me of any significance whatever I'm facing will pass and I will be delivered in this life for the next but I refuse to let the temporary trials of this world steal God's glory and praise from my lips. Use your lips for praise. Say that declare that truth in your life and then start singing a worship song or hum it or whistle it or whatever won't get you in trouble with the boss. Let the truth of God swallow up the truth of your circumstances. Don't deny that you're in bad circumstances but let the better truth swallow them up. Psalm 56 verse 11 says in God I have put my trust I will not be afraid what can man do to me. So we talked about how Jesus causes natural joy and he is our chosen joy but he also gives us supernatural joy. The joy you get from going to a movie is like a thimble fall. The joy that you get from remembering your salvation is buckets and buckets. But the joy from the Holy Spirit is an ocean. It is vast and unfathomable and it is so mysterious it's almost unrecognizable as joy. It's mixed with love and peace and patience. It is serenity. There's a story of a Christian woman who was tending to the wounds of a leper and a man walked up to her and said I wouldn't do that for a million dollars and she returned to him and said neither would I. What is it that can fill a person's heart to leave their family and their life and their country behind and go off into a place of hardship and suffering and persecution and possibly death and yet still do it with joy and praise and love. There are imprisoned tortured Christians around this world who even in the midst of that unimaginable suffering can still look at their persecutors and not just have the strength to endure their persecution but look at them with love and forgiveness and to pray for them and to grieve for the loss of their souls. Two men named John Leonard Dobr and David Nitchman. They were early participants in what's known as the Moravian movement. They heard about some slaves down in the Virgin Islands who had no access to the gospel and they said they were so filled with love and joy by the Holy Spirit they said we're going to go down there and we're going to preach to them even if we have to sell ourselves into slavery. They were willing to sell themselves into slavery. Only something supernatural can lead a man into that. Are you filled with the Spirit? Have you experienced the depths of Jesus Christ? One taste will ruin you because this world will no longer have anything to offer you that can compare. But it's okay because God will feed you with the food that your spirit has been hungering for your whole life. So get on your knees, get on your face and wrestle before God. Get hungry, cry out and he will hear forsake the fleeting temporary worthless joys of this world and say I've had enough of the water that leaves me thirsty God. I want to drink from your well, the water that will leave me never thirsty because it will become in me a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. Jesus Christ causes natural joy. He is our chosen joy and he gives us supernatural joy. Do you know him? Heavenly Father we thank you so much for this that we've been surprised by this joy. This joy that we always longed for but never thought we could get has come through your son Jesus. Thank you so much. We are sorry for the times when we come here to worship you and we're just doing it out of a sense of duty. We ask you now God to fill us with your Holy Spirit to battle the false truths in our minds that tell us that we have no reason for joy. We ask God that you strike those down and replace them with real truth of the good news of your son Jesus. As we go through this week God, just chase after us and persist after us. Help us to not be satisfied anymore with the joys of this world. Lead us to you God. Draw us to you. Help us to find our joy only in you. We pray these things in Jesus name, Amen. [BLANK\_AUDIO]