**Welcome to Beacon Community Church Wibsey. Whether in Person or via Facebook on this the first Sunday of Advent 2021 – Christmas is Coming - Yes! What Joy should fill our hearts minds and body with this thought – for this is our Theme today The Joy of the Lord is my strength.**

**Lets Pray**

**Our two opening hymns**

**Ascribe greatness to our God the Rock – 40**

**For I’m building a people of Power - 151**

**What Is Joy in Christianity?**

What is joy in Christianity? Billy Graham once said - It is a natural human inclination to think that living through trials and negative circumstances would not be an occasion for joy. Choosing to respond to life’s difficult situations with inner contentment and satisfaction doesn’t seem to make sense. Joy is a choice! **But** the Lord is the originator of true joy.

The text is clear. We can respond to life’s trials with genuine joy if we *know*that the Lord has a purpose for why He would allow those difficult times of suffering and trials. In this passage, the purpose for trials was to produce patience or endurance (the ability to hold up under a trial) in our lives.

Knowing that our loving Heavenly Father is doing something specific in our lives and that He is doing what is best for us helps us respond with genuine joy. Life’s trials are certainly not fun, but we can react to those painful situations with joy if we understand that God is demonstrating His [love](https://www.christianity.com/bible/bible-verses-about-love-24) for us through those circumstances.

JI Packer – To know that nothing happens in Gods World apart from Gods Will, may frighten the godless, but stabilises the saints! – Absolute Joy.

[**Romans 15:13**](https://www.biblestudytools.com/romans/15-13.html) says, "May the God of **hope fill you with all joy** and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope." So God can fill us with joy. But do we have a proper understanding and definition for the gift of joy? Let's define it below.

**What Is the Definition of Real Joy?**

Let’s go back to the beginning and identify a working definition for *joy.* Simply put, Biblical joy is choosing to respond to external circumstances with inner contentment and satisfaction, because we know that **God will use these experiences to accomplish His work** in and through our lives.

James is telling his readers that they can choose to respond with joy, even during times of trials and sufferings. Joy is a choice! But it does come from the Lord — and He alone is the originator of true joy. We don’t have to produce it or drum it up on our own.

**We are going to sing – Joy to the World 393**

**What Does the Bible Teach Us about Joy?**

**1. God, Himself, is the source of our joy**

[**Galatians 5:22-23**](https://www.biblestudytools.com/galatians/passage/?q=galatians+5:22-23) gives us a list of the fruits of the spirit — and joy is listed there as one of the by-products of the Holy Spirit living and abiding in us. This chapter in Galatians tells us that it is possible to **“live in the Spirit”** and **“walk in theSpirit**” ([**Galatians 5:16**](https://www.biblestudytools.com/galatians/5-16.html)**and 25**), meaning that He will naturally produce His fruit in our lives **as we live for Him.**

**God alone can produce true joy** — and He does that naturally through His Spirit living in those who have put their trust in Him. It’s important for us to understand that only God Himself can give us the ability to respond to life’s difficult circumstances with that inner contentment and satisfaction.

**2. We can choose to respond to life’s trials with joy when we consider God’s purpose for those times of suffering**

It’s true that only God can supply genuine joy. However, there is a key technique in [**James 1:2**](https://www.biblestudytools.com/james/1-2.html) to help us. Once again, this verse says, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials.”** Notice the word **“count.”** (This is the Key to unlock Gods joy in our lives.)

Some other English versions of the Bible translate it, **“consider.”** It’s a word that means to **systematically scrutinize or to examine as in taking an exam** (see Jamieson-Fausset-Brown “Bible Commentary”). The idea here is that the believer should thoroughly list the potential advantages of this situation to gain a better understanding of what God may want to accomplish in our lives.

A simple illustration of this truth would be a child counting the change in their piggy bank and then realising that they have more money than they thought. The old chorus *Count Your Blessings* by Johnson Oatman, Jr. makes the same point, “Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.” **When we truly count or considerwhat God is doing,** we will conclude that indeed **our response should be one of joy.**

**3. It is possible to have joy to the fullest even during life’s most difficult times**

It’s also important to note the simple word **“all”**in [**James 1:2**](https://www.biblestudytools.com/james/1-2.html).The writer uses it to describe the kind of joy that can only come from God Himself. It is a word that means completely or wholly. This is not just **“some” joy**. We can experience **“all joy,”** or**joy to the fullest,** or **the most complete joy.**

The Apostle Peter also writes about this kind of joy even in the midst of a variety of trials in [**1 Peter 1:6**](https://www.biblestudytools.com/1-peter/1-6.html)**,** “In this you greatly rejoice, **though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials.” He teaches us that we can “greatly rejoice.”**

**This is an overflowing, exuberance-filled, lively joy**. That is exactly the kind of joy that God’s people can experience even when faced with a variety of trials or difficult times. God provides that abundant and complete joy, it can be displayed in the passion we have for the Lord. Recognising our cup of life is pressed down Shaked up and running over Psalm 23:5

It is a natural human inclination to think that living through trials and negative circumstances would not be an occasion for joy. Choosing to respond to life’s difficult situations with inner contentment and satisfaction doesn’t seem to make sense. Yet how often memories of one you have just lost can bring tears of sadness and joy as you remember circumstances of your experience of them.

**Yet, the believer can experience genuine joy to the fullest by taking the initiative to actively consider all that God is doing and that He has a definite purpose in mind for His people.**

Joy doesn't mean forcing happiness during sad circumstances. We can usually tell when someone tries to fake it until they make it. **But joy comes during every season. It is an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Joy comes from our choices to choose joy.**

**Paul reminds us – Philippians 4:11-13 – Pure Joy**

**11**Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. **12**I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. **13**For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength!

Jesus – Joy unspeakable and full of glory – This Christmas and every moment of our lives thereafter.

Yours in Christ Pastor Paul

**Notices – Lynne Oldroyd Please**

**Monday – 9:00 – 11:00 Community Café**

 **2:00pm Chairobics/Friendship Group**

 **5:00 – 7:00pm Bids**

**Tuesday 6:15 Pilates**

**Thursday 6:15 Prayer meeting (Church Office)**

 **7:15 Community Choir**

**Saturday 4th Dec 10 - 11am Christmas is coming an event, for young and older alike, craft, carols, Festive food and drinks, games and a singalong too. A visit from Santa and much more for everyone, a short explanation of the Christian Charity in Halifax called Happy Days. Please let as many know Whats going on please.**

**Sunday 5th 10:45am Pastor Paul “Abounding Love beyond words for Christmas“ plus communion.**

**Today Sunday 28th (Afterward the service everyone is asked to bring a packed lunch – then after we have shared lunch together, Join Pastor Paul in church for a prayer time for our community and Christmas Program).**

**We are going to finish our Service not with a carol, but with a song that should lift us all.**

**I want to walk with Jesus Christ**

**God bless you all – Yours in Christ Pastor Paul & Claire**