

## Teen Devotion

### Year B – The Third Sunday in Advent

#### The King Shall Come



**One truth shared:** Especially when we're struggling, God desires to bring us perfect joy through the gift of Jesus!

*The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.*

*I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.*

**Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11**

### He is Bringing Perfect Joy

A talk radio host made an astounding comment, “There’s a lot of pain and fear in the people of our country.... So many people are not happy right now.”

Is that you?

Young people all over our country are experiencing a great deal of anxiety along with a variety of other mental health issues. This is supposed to be a festive time of the year with Christmas parties and gatherings all around us. When you are hurting and in pain or full of anxiety, it isn't easy to watch people around you celebrate. How can you find joy and celebrate this time of year when you constantly live under such a heavy burden?

Here's an idea: Let's announce next year to be a “Year of Jubilee.” That's what Isaiah talks when he announces the “year of the LORD's favor.” This is a reference to an actual Jewish historical event called the Year of Jubilee. Every 50 years when the jubilee year came, all debts were forgiven, all slaves were freed, and all inheritance land was returned to its original owner. The past was forgiven and forgotten, the slate was wiped clean, and everyone was given a new beginning!

At Christmas, we celebrate God sending Jesus into this world to give unhappy people a new beginning and bring relief to *the beggars, the brokenhearted, the enslaved, the prisoners, the people who lost their inheritance*—to those crushed with sin and helpless to do anything about their desperate situation. Christmas celebrates God taking action and doing what we could never do. He ushered in our Year of Jubilee. Our debt of sin has been canceled, the prison door of death has been opened, our inheritance in heaven has been restored, and we have a new beginning!

What a difference having a Messiah makes in our lives, especially when we approach our God. When we came to God before, we were completely out of place. We were people who had only the torn and stained rags of their sinful lives covering them. Dressed like that, we had no right to stand in God's holy presence. But now we stand before our God looking like a bride dressed beautifully on her wedding day—pure and white in the garments of holiness God's own Son has selected for us.

“So many people are not happy right now.” But it doesn’t have to be you! With the perfection of Christ covering us through faith, we have favor with God. The trumpet of joy is sounding in our hearts as we reflect on the change Jesus has made in our lives. So rejoice, my friends! God gives you perfect joy!

**Prayer:** Almighty and eternal God, fill my heart with thoughts of jubilee! Though I might be weighed down with problems, troubles, worries, and anxieties, in Jesus I have reason to celebrate! This festive season, focus my attention on the good news of freedom and the holy clothing I wear because of my Savior. In his name I ask this. Amen.

## Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

### Year B – The Third Sunday in Advent

#### The King Shall Come

**One truth shared:** Especially when we’re struggling, God desires to bring us perfect joy through the gift of Jesus!

### He is Bringing Perfect Joy

***Starting the Discussion:** This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- What are the top things you look forward to most this holiday season?
- Studies have shown this is one of the hardest times of year for a lot of people. Why do you think that is?

***Connecting:** This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they’ve looked at it.*

Self-analyze: When you think of your personal anxieties and fears, what’s behind them? What’s causing them?

***Digging In:** Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- In the Old Testament, every debt was forgiven in the 50th year, the Year of Jubilee. What is the correlation to the spiritual debt that we owe to God because of our sins?
- With this thought in mind, how do Christmas and the Year of Jubilee transform how we think about troubles, struggles, problems, and anxieties that confront us?
- Explain the word pictures that Isaiah uses: “to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,” “the oil of joy instead of mourning,” “a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair,” “They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor.”
- God has turned our lives into an unending Year of Jubilee. How can our lives now be an eternal celebration of joy and happiness as we rejoice in the gift our Savior has given to us?

**Conclusion:** *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the “connecting question” above.*

- Someone was overheard complaining, “The problem with America every Christmas is it’s growing infatuation with the North Pole.” Put into your own words what you think that means. Do you agree or disagree?
- In the remaining days before Christmas, give one way you will intentionally strive to break “being down” about everything and be more joyful to God’s glory.