



Light of the World, Pt. 2: From Sorrow to Joy

During the Christmas season, some people find it easy to be happy while others struggle with loneliness and sorrow. Yet some who are in the midst of suffering still find joy. How is that possible? What if there was a way to find joy regardless of your situation? There is, and it's found in God's favor and grace.

Bottom Line: I am favored by God and he is with me.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you like to give and receive Christmas cards? Do you write Christmas letters and include them in cards you send? If you write letters, do they include the ups and downs of the year or do you generally stick to the good highlights of the year?
2. What brings you the most joy this time of year and what causes great stress for you?
3. How would you define the following words: joy, happiness, favor, and grace?
4. **Read Luke 1:26-33.** God sent an angel to tell Mary, a young unmarried woman from a small town called Nazareth, that he had chosen her to be the mother of Jesus. Describe Mary's reaction to the angel. Was she happy, confused, upset, shocked?
5. **Read Luke 46-48.** Mary was about to go through the hardest times of her life, yet she found joy. Why? Describe a moment when you were going through a difficult time. Were you able to find joy during that time?
6. What is your reaction to the following statement?
"God's favor and God's presence are not meant to bring us happy circumstances in this world. They're meant to bring us joy despite our circumstances."
7. **Read Romans 5:1-5.** When have you felt favored by God and covered by his grace? Have you ever felt like you were out of favor with God? Describe how you overcame that to find joy.
8. What has been the most helpful thought/idea from the message this week? How has that thought/idea helped you?
9. How can the group encourage you this week?

*If time doesn't allow for you to discuss all of these questions, use only the ones you feel would be most helpful for your group.