

# GOD WITH US

*an advent series*

## **A Longing Fulfilled**

John 16:19-24

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### **John 16:19-24**

Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again

and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

“It belongs to the imperfection of everything human that man can only attain his desire by passing through its opposite.”

- Soren Kierkegaard, *Journals* (1841)

- We long for Christ’s joy in our suffering.
- We long for Christ’s joy in our requests for help.
- We long for Christ’s joy in our lack of purpose.

### **John 16:21**

A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.

When Jesus talks about giving birth, he states it exactly how it is. In the throws of labor, you're fixated on the pain, what you can do to ease it, and how long it will take to go away. Your mind is so focused on this, that you're NOT thinking that, eventually, your baby that you've been eagerly awaiting, will finally be with you. But, the instant you were born, I wasn't thinking about the pain I'd had just seconds before. In fact, I wasn't even thanking God that the pain was over. I was completely focused on the ecstatic (albeit exhausted) joy of looking into your beautiful brown eyes. And within a very short amount of time, there was little memory of the anguish. There was only the joy that I finally had you in my arms.

Because of this amazing miracle "memory loss", we're willing to do it all again!

I love it! Thank you!!

And I'll remind you - 3 babies, no drugs, all natural, breathed through hours of pain. I'm proud of that.

Wow! Yes!!

**The joy of Jesus is a joy familiar with suffering and pain, because that's the character of Jesus.**

### **Isaiah 53:2-3**

He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

### **Isaiah 53:8-9**

By oppression and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

### **Hebrews 12:2**

For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of God.

**Joy is not the absence of pain, suffering, and frustration. It's a companion to them.**

**What if the reason joy isn't more fully evident in our world is because we distance ourselves from our desperation, suffering, and grief?**

**“Suffering and joy are the same muscle.”**

**We experience Christ’s joy in God’s response to our requests for help.**

**John 16:23-24**

In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. <sup>24</sup>

“In a relational context, joy emerges from a sense of resting on someone who gives; in such a context, having received—being a recipient—is not experienced as a debt but as the basis for joy. So the stance of receptivity that seems integral to joy points to another—a giver or givers (or Giver). Perhaps one could say that joy is a mode of enjoying gratitude. That is, joy is the enjoyment of being a recipient, where receiving a gift fosters not resentment at being indebted but an open welcome of such gift-ing. It presupposes recognition of one’s ‘indebtedness’ as a good feature of a blessed creaturely life.”

- James K.A. Smith, *The State of Joy*

**We experience Christ’s joy as we find purpose in his generous way of life.**

## “Spiritual Games”

“Joy is found in an experience of losing oneself, of being caught up in something bigger, something beyond. Such experiences of joy do not require the dissolution of consciousness, but they do seem to require a release from self-consciousness.”

- James K.A. Smith, *The State of Joy*

Jan Hynes, *Bonding Time: the Nativity in Townsville*

