



Wednesdays @ 11am via Facebook Live

Ministry of  
Biblical Studies

## December MBS Series

December 6th - Living Hope  
December 13th - Peace In Christ  
December 20th - The Joy of the Lord  
December 27th - No Class

MBS Classes will resume on Wednesday,  
January 10th, 2024!

*All are invited to join us!*

● LIVE

**December 6, 2023**  
**December 13th, 2023**  
**December 20th, 2023**



## METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

MINISTRY OF BIBLICAL STUDIES Handout

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### Welcome to the Metropolitan Community Church Ministry of Biblical Study Classes December Advent Series

Throughout the season of Advent, we're able to anticipate God's gifts to us and consider what they really mean. Over the three sessions of this study, participants will consider familiar texts from the book of Isaiah to reveal the gifts that God longs to give us and deeply desires for us to receive into our lives: Hope, Peace and Joy.

*Advent*  
*The Season of Hope and Expectation*

HOPE

PEACE

JOY

LOVE



Wednesday, December 6th, 2023

## HOPE - 6th

What does it mean to have hope amid trying times? Hope is more than a feeling; it isn't simply being perpetually optimistic or having a "hopeful" attitude. Scripture offers us an understanding of hope that is much more robust. Christian hope has heft, endurance, and purpose—and God is its source.

God, "in his great mercy ... has given us new birth into a living hope" (1 Pet. 1:3). And it is our "God of hope" who enables us to "overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). This reality isn't true only in good times; in fact, it is in dark and difficult times when hope truly shows its mettle.

As Jay Y. Kim writes in "Hope: An Expectant Leap,"

This is what Christian hope looks like. It doesn't ignore fear, anxiety, and doubt; it confronts them. It holds steady, clinging to peace in the midst of chaos. Through life's many treacherous storms ... Christian hope is buoyed by something greater that has happened and something greater that is going to happen again.

## Advent

### Hope Is an Expectant Leap

Advent reminds us that Christian hope is shaped by what has happened and what's going to happen again.

This week's class explores the theme of hope as it weaves throughout the biblical story. In these daily biblical reflections, we focus on our hope in Christ's future coming—the Second Advent we await that gives us endurance, confidence, and joy in our daily lives, no matter what difficulties we might face.

We reflect on the hope of God's people in the Old Testament as they relied upon God in hardship and we look at prophecies of hope that pointed toward the First Advent: the coming of the Messiah.

We contemplate the miracle of hope breaking through in the Incarnation, when "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14)—as a human baby, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

This is our "living hope" or, as the New Living Translation puts it, our "great expectation." Our hope is animated by our confident expectation that the child who was born will one day come again in glory to put all wrong things right, and his kingdom will have no end.

Wednesday, December 13th, 2023

## PEACE - 13th

### Key Text

"And all thy children [shall be] taught of the Lord; and great [shall be] the peace of thy children." Isaiah 54:13.

### Introduction

" 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.' [John 14:27.] This peace is not the peace that comes through conformity to the world. Christ never purchased peace by compromise with evil. The peace that Christ left His disciples is internal rather than external and was ever to remain with His witnesses through strife and contention."

The words Jesus spoke in John 14:27 help us experience moments of peace, moments where peace is freely given. John 14:27 states "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives. Don't let your heart be troubled or fearful."

In this passage we find Jesus speaking with his disciples before His crucifixion. We can only try to imagine the fear, doubt, and worry they must have been feeling. The last three years of their lives had been spent walking with this man. They had witnessed miracles and seen firsthand the saving grace of God. Now, Jesus was leaving them. They were going to be all alone, surrounded by people who hated Jesus.

Our world is not unlike the world Jesus's disciples experienced. We live in a world that has trouble believing in the One True God. When we speak about Him, people become offended, and wars are started. There is no peace in our world except for the peace that comes from God.

Have you ever stepped outside while snow gently falls on the ground? Did you listen to the air as it is devoid of sound? I would often walk out on the porch of our home, which sat in the middle of a 60-acre farm, when the snow began falling. The peacefulness of those moments was carved into my soul. There were no sounds. The animals were not stirring, and birds were as still as statues.

While I watched the snow fall, I would always think about how peaceful everything was. It was as if nothing could bring harm to me.

But the peace Jesus experienced came only from the Father. He knew what was going to be needed during the days ahead for his disciples and He knows what is ahead for us.

Wednesday, December 20th, 2023

## JOY - 20th

"... The joy of the Lord makes you strong." (Nehemiah 8:10 NIRV)

1. When you hear the word "joy," what comes to mind?

Most people define joy as a feeling of happiness when you are smiling and laughing a lot. And, they think that happiness comes from "good happenings." Good happenings mean everything is going your way, turning out right. You have lots of money and are healthy and are very successful in work or school. Right?

But, what happens if things are not so good? Your family is stressed financially. You may be struggling in work or school. Your relationships are fraying. You or someone close to you is very sick. Can you really have joy then?

In the Bible, joy is a deep inner gladness regardless of circumstances going on around you. That means whether you are rich or poor, sick or healthy, successful or struggling, you can still have a feeling of gladness or pleasure deep down inside. Now, you may not feel like smiling on the outside, but you can still smile on the inside. Have you ever felt that way?

This kind of joy that I am describing is supernatural. It is part of the character of God and comes to us only from a relationship with Him through knowing Jesus Christ.

2. Read 1 Timothy 1:11. How does Paul describe God?

The word "blessed" used here by Paul can also be translated "happy." So you can read the verse as "glorious good news of the happy God." The glorious good news is the gospel—how we can trust in Jesus and receive God's grace and forgiveness for our sins. God is happy, you could say He is joyful, to offer this good news to people. Our God is a joyful God.

In the lesson about God's grace (Lesson 5), you saw Jesus teaching that our Father God was like the father of the prodigal son when he returned home. Do you remember how that father acted? He was happy to see his son, filled with love, running toward him, hugging and kissing him. He called for a great celebration. That's joy.

3. Read Luke 15:1-7. Who is rejoicing and when?

4. Read Luke 15:8-10. Who is rejoicing and when?

God has joy whenever anyone comes to Him to have his or her sins forgiven. The Bible describes lots of rejoicing in heaven at that time (verses 7, 10).

The Bible also teaches that God finds great pleasure in His creation. Do you remember what God said about His creation at the end of each of the creation days? He said it was good. After day 6, He said it was very good. God wasn't only giving His approval but was also revealing His pleasure. The Father God has joy in what His hands have made, especially His creatures. That includes you. You are one of His creatures.

Does that make you want to smile inside to think that God finds pleasure in you?

5. Read Zephaniah 3:17.

- For God's people who are trusting in Him, what is revealed about God's joy?
- Have you ever thought about God rejoicing over you through singing?

God's joy finds great pleasure in His creation and His creatures, especially people who trust in Him.



Joy is something that God has. But, it's also something that God gives. He is the source of joy, just as He is the source of love and grace as we have already studied. Jesus told His disciples they would have great joy coming from Him.

6. Read John 15:11. What does Jesus want for those who trust in Him?

Jesus, who was God, had God's joy in Him. And, He promised to give His joy to His disciples so that it would be in them, also. Jesus didn't promise this to just those who knew Him when He was on earth.

7. Read 1 Peter 1:8.

- What does Peter write to all of us?
- How does Peter describe the joy God gives to us?

Though you have not seen Him, the moment you believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you. And, He gives you God's glorious, uncontainable joy.

There's a song you may have sung that says, "The joy of the Lord is my strength." That phrase comes from the book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament.

8. Read Nehemiah 8:10. What does God's joy do for us?

9. If God's joy is the ability to smile on the inside even if things are going wrong on the outside, how could having that make you strong?

I have had a sign on my wall for over 40 years that reads, "Joy is the most infallible sign of the presence of God." During those miserable, painful times, God's joy inside of you assures you of His presence with you. Don't you love that assurance?!

The joy of the Lord is God's joy. He has it, and when He gives it to His people, it makes them strong. God's joy in us gives us the courage to face tough times. God's joy finds great pleasure in His creation and His creatures, especially people who trust in Him. His joy in us makes us strong.

10. Having God's joy in us, we should delight in the things that God delights in. We can ask ourselves: "what pleases God, what gives Him joy?" How would you answer that?

When you have His joy, then you should take pleasure or delight in those same things. When you have the joy of the Lord, you rejoice in justice. You find pleasure in God and knowing Him, not in personal and selfish pleasures. You also find delight in studying His Word the Bible, in doing what pleases Him, and in praising God.

Some people think that when you are a Christian, you give up anything that gives you pleasure. That is not what the Bible says. It is not wrong for a Christian to have pleasure or to seek pleasure; it is only wrong to seek pleasure in the things that are selfish.

Christians filled with God's joy should find many reasons to laugh and delight in life. We can serve God with delight. We can praise God and sing worship songs with delight. We can love our families and friends with delight.

And, our joy will be even greater in heaven when we are with Jesus and can have the delight of seeing Him with our own eyes.

