



# Longing for Christmas

And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah 8:9-10  
NRSV

## "Longing for Joy"

December 13 & 15, 2019

"I can think of nothing less pleasurable than a life devoted to pleasure."  
- John D. Rockefeller

**An Ancient/Modern Problem: Anhedonia** – a feeling of \_\_\_\_\_.  
*Anhedonia*: A reduced ability to experience pleasure.  
*Anhedonia* is not having anything in your life that can move your \_\_\_\_\_.

"Despite having more resources of pleasure than ever before in history, we are probably the unhappiest people who have ever lived." – Arch Hart

Deaths of \_\_\_\_\_ rose in America 900 percent from 1999-2017. (55-64)  
\_\_\_\_\_ is the thief of joy.

Knowledge without \_\_\_\_\_ leads to fear, anxiety, and depression.

*Our brains aren't built for omniscient awareness of the world's suffering.*  
- Tristan Harris, *The Center for Humane Technology*

### How to Find Joy: Nehemiah 8:9-10

The prophet Ezra urged the people to \_\_\_\_\_ with friends and family and to send \_\_\_\_\_ to the poor and to those who could not attend.  
It could be, "Joy \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord is our strength."  
It could be, "Joy \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord is our strength" including our commitment.  
It could be, "God's strength and protection is our \_\_\_\_\_."

Joy to the world, The Lord is come  
*"The incarnation is about seeing the greatness of Jesus. The little baby is just the beginning of the incarnation. It is a cosmic event that touches the whole universe...bringing a wonderful, ravishing reconciliation."* – Dallas Willard

Joy begins and ends with \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 16:11  
Joy is a \_\_\_\_\_ of following Jesus. Mark 12:30-31  
Jesus says, \_\_\_\_\_ is the way to joy. John 15:7-11  
Joy is a result of a life guided and powered by the \_\_\_\_\_. Galatians 5:22

### We Can Have Joy Right Where We Are

\_\_\_\_\_ is in you! 2 Corinthians 13:5, Galatians 2:20  
\_\_\_\_\_ are in Christ! Colossians 3:1-3  
Christ is in \_\_\_\_\_! Colossians 3:3  
God will supply your every \_\_\_\_\_! – Philippians 4:19

**Action Steps:** \_\_\_\_\_ exposure to comparison, cruelty, and tragedy.  
Engage nature, \_\_\_\_\_ (weep), gather, \_\_\_\_\_ the poor.  
\_\_\_\_\_ God. Remember, you are surrounded by \_\_\_\_\_!