

# Joy

Stir up your power, O Lord, and with great might come among us; and, because we are sorely hindered by our sins, let your bountiful grace and mercy speedily help and deliver us; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

## Look

This past Sunday was Gaudete Sunday (pronounced gow-day-tay). Gaudete is a Latin word that means rejoice. Some Christians call this Joyful Sunday. While joy and happiness are similar, they are not exactly the same thing.

1. How would you describe the difference between joy and happiness?
2. What makes you feel happy?
3. What makes you feel joy?

## Book Philippians 4:4-7

Sometimes we need to hear words of encouragement, words that help us to press on when life is challenging, and when we begin to wonder if God has abandoned us. Paul's letter to the Philippians is meant to encourage them as they struggle in their discipleship.

1. What is the first thing that Paul tells them to do? What do you think it means to "Rejoice in the Lord"?
2. What difference does it make to "Rejoice in the Lord"? How is that encouraging?
3. What alternative does Paul offer to worrying? How does prayer impact worry?
4. How does thankfulness impact worry?
5. How does prayer affect joy?

## Took

Happiness is fleeting – and sometimes even hard to find. But joy, joy is different. Joy is bigger and deeper and more powerful than happiness. Joy is present even in the midst of struggle and pain.

1. What is it like to experience joy in the midst of challenges and hardships? What has that experience been like in your life? What was the source of your joy?
2. Do you take seriously Paul's advice to "Rejoice in the Lord"? If so, how does that manifest itself in your daily life? If not, why not?