12-14-2025

<u>Unwrapped: Living with Intentional Joy</u>

Joy Announced

<u>Luke 2:8-12</u> - 8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **9** An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. **10** But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that **will cause great joy for all the people. 11** Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. **12** This will be a sign to you: You will fin**d a baby wrapped in** cloths and lying in a manger.”

Joy is declared by God, not produced by circumstances.

Biblical joy is rooted in God’s promise-

<u>John 15:11</u> - I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

<u>John 11:43-44</u> - 43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” 44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

Just as a gift is unwrapped to reveal something wonderful, God wants to “unwrap” our lives, releasing His joy.

Don’t rewrap yourself in fear or past pain. Step into intentional joy.

By intentionally unwrapping the layers of our lives(our habits, routines,ways,etc.) we allow new life to take root.

God wants to unwrap us from the things that hold our joy captive, giving us intentional, overflowing joy.

<u>Luke 2:7</u> - and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger,

Just as a gift is unwrapped to reveal something wonderful, God wants to "unwrap" our lives, releasing His joy

Joy in the Pain

Nehemiah 8:10 - 10 Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

Hebrews 12:2 - For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The enemy wants joy stolen because joy fuels faith, hope, and perseverance.

A joyful believer is a powerful witness.

Joy doesn't remove hardship—it gives us strength to endure it.

Joy Action Plan

1. Choose Joy Daily-Abide in God

- Spend daily time in prayer and Scripture.
- Meditate on God's promises.
- Focus on His presence, not circumstances.

Philippians 4:4-8 - 4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

2. Practice Gratitude

- Write down 3 things you're thankful for each day.
- Verbally thank God for blessings, big and small.
- Decide to rejoice even in challenges (Philippians 4:4).

3. Choose Positive Focus

- Replace complaints with Scripture or affirmations.
- Celebrate progress and small victories.

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

4. Obey God & Live with Purpose

- Take steps to follow God's commands daily.
- Serve others and act with kindness.

Luke 1:38 - "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled."

5. Release What Binds You

- Identify what restricts you and surrender it to God.
- Speak words of hope, encouragement, and faith.
- Joy cannot thrive with fear, anger, or unforgiveness.

6. Surround Yourself with Joyful Influences

- Spend time with positive, faith-filled people.
- Limit exposure to negativity and toxic influences.

Hebrews 10:24–25

Believers Are Called To A Lifestyle Of Shared Faith And Shared Rhythms. - Pastor Adam De La Vega

7. Share Your Joy

- Encourage and bless others.
- Be a visible witness of God's goodness in your life.

Romans 15:13 *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him..."*

Sharing Christ-centered joy strengthens the community of believers.

Fellowship Is Expected For A Joyful, Continuous Life In Christ. - Pastor Adam De La Vega

"Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day." - Henri Nouwen

Joy is discovered when we are intentionally unwrapped by God, just as Lazarus was unwrapped to life.

Joy increases when we stop trying to control outcomes and start trusting God's purposes.