

GOD OF JOY

God is joy's source. He Himself rejoices, and He invites us to rejoice in Him, no matter the circumstance.

SCRIPTURE*	MUSIC†
Psalm 16:11 Psalm 42:8-43:5 Isaiah 55 Jeremiah 32:36-42 Habakkuk 3:17-19 Zephaniah 3:17 John 15:1-17; 16:24 Philippians 4:1-19 Hebrews 12:1-4 1 John 1:1-7	Be Thou My Vision Break Forth, O Joyful Heart (Forrest) SATB I Run to Christ It Is Well with My Soul O God Beyond All Praising O God, My Joy O God, My Joy (Ijames) SATB Praise to the Lord, the Almighty Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven Rejoice in the Lord Rejoice, the Lord Is King Sometimes a Light Surprises (Courtney) SATB Thee Will I Love (Courtney) SATB



NORTHWEST VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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* Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

† Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

GIVING THE PERFECT GIFT

Jeremiah 32:41 | *Think of a gift that you have given your child that made your child very happy. In your family, you can probably think of a gift that got a similar reaction from your child. Parents delight in giving their children that “perfect gift” because they delight in giving their children joy. God gives richly to us in salvation, and doing so gives Him joy. In our relationship with Him, we are not left to hope to appease Him or not make Him angry. Rather, we can rejoice in Him because He takes joy in blessing us.*

HINDS' FEET (HABAKKUK 3)

Use the text of William Cowper’s “Sometimes a Light Surprises” to introduce the theme. The last verse talks about rejoicing in God even when life does not give us the blessings we expect. This rejoicing leads to spiritual strength, which then leads to “surefootedness,” a sense of courage in fearful places. We might picture a mountain sheep standing on a steep cliff as an illustration of this spiritual quality.

Perhaps when some of you saw that our worship would focus on “joy” this morning, you got a little cranky inside. You know God promises joy, but right now “real life” seems to be all frustration and sadness. Where’s the joy? You might even be a bit upset at God.

You’re “right in there” with the minor prophet Habakkuk. He starts his short book a bit miffed at God, who is using wicked nations to punish God’s chosen people for their sins, and that just doesn’t seem right. But by the end of the book, Habakkuk is changed. Not only is Habakkuk “over” his bad mood—he’s actually rejoicing in his God.

He ends the book, saying that “although the fig tree doesn’t blossom, [the vines don’t bear fruit], the [olives don’t produce oil], and the fields [don’t yield any food], the [flocks lost] and the [livestock stalls empty], He will rejoice in the LORD; He will take joy in the God of His salvation.

How did Habakkuk get back to really rejoicing? He looked back at God Himself. Today’s choir song says it this way: “when comforts are declining, [God] grants [our souls] a season of clear shining”—a fresh look at His character, revealed to us in His Word. God reminded Habbakuk that the wicked nations punishing Judah would one day be punished themselves. God wasn’t disowning His people, but was refining them.

That is God’s heart toward us. As believers, when we meditate on “God’s salvation,” we “find it ever new.” The Gospel of Christ “sets us free from present sorrow,” not by changing our

circumstances, but by pointing beyond them to our secure relationship with our heavenly Father. “While in Him confiding, we cannot but rejoice!” (Caleb French)