

Sermon Title: **Joy - Go and Tell What You Hear and See**

Bible: Matthew 11:2-11 (& Isaiah 35:3-10)

Where & When: Third Sunday of Advent at Gilroy UMC on Dec. 15th, 2019

Audience: about 33 English-speaking Church Members

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, you sent us your son, Jesus Christ. It is good and joyful news to us. We hope that the coming of Baby Jesus is also good news to the blind and the poor. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.

1. Lectionary Year A in 2019 Advent

| | Meaning | Color | Old Testament | Gospel |
|--------------|----------------|--------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 12/01 | Hope | Purple | Isaiah 2:2-5 | Matthew 24:36-44 |
| 12/08 | Peace | Purple | Isaiah 11:6-9 | Matthew 3:1-12 |
| 12/15 | Joy | Pink | Isaiah 35:3-10 | Matthew 11:2-11 |
| 12/22 | Love | Purple | Isaiah 7:10-14 | Matthew 1:18-25 |
| 12/24 | Christ | White | Isaiah 9:6-7 | Luke 2:1-20 |

In 2019 Advent, I am following the Lectionary scriptures and the meaning of the Advent candle. We have previously lit the candles of Hope and Peace. Today, we light this pink candle of Joy. As you can see, while three of the candles are purple, today's candle is pink. In this time of waiting and preparation, we rejoice.

2. Go and Tell What You Hear and See

John the Baptist asked, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” And Jesus answered, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.” What if someone comes and asks you, “Is your church the one that I should go to, or am I to go to another church?” What is your answer? There are many good churches in Gilroy. However, we are the only United Methodist Church in Gilroy. As a United Methodist church, we are the best in Gilroy! So, my answer to you is “Go and tell what you hear and see.” We have many small groups, and we have many ministries. Even though I have only served this church for a year and a half, there are many stories to share. I believe that you have more stories than I have. These are just some examples. We listen to each other. We sing together. We laugh a lot together. We have many joys. We pray for each other. We care for each other. We remember our beloved ones. We share our tears. We work for the community together. We visit the sick, and send Valentines cards to them. We feed the homeless together. We care about the earth. We provide backpacks for the students. Today, at the coffee time, we will be Santa and Rudolph to wrap the Christmas gifts to the children.

3. Our Passion and Love to Break the World Record

I can say that we are the best United Methodist Church in Gilroy, right? Yes, we are number 1 in Gilroy. We have the Gold Medal. But, I do not want to stop here. I am still hungry. Well, you might say that I am greedy. I want us to break the world record every time. Do you understand this greediness? Can I say this greediness is our passion or our love? In the Book of the

Discipline, one process of carrying out our mission is that “we make disciples as we send persons into the world to live lovingly and justly as servants of Christ, by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, caring for the stranger, freeing the oppressed, being and becoming a compassionate, caring presence, and working to develop social structures that are consistent with the gospel.” We are servants of Christ. We are joyful when we heal the sick, when we feed the hungry, when we care for the stranger, when we free the oppressed, and when we have a compassionate and caring presence. How about when we work to develop social structures?

4. Can I be joyful when I work to develop social structures?

It is joyful for me to visit the sick and feed the hungry. But can I be joyful, when I work to develop social structures, according to the gospel? I am coming from different social structures, in South Korea. There are many female pastors now in South Korea, but it is very difficult to find female SENIOR pastors. In my over 30 years experience, shamefully, I can count them on one hand. But in the States, in the United Methodist Church, I need many or all of your hands to count female senior pastors. But when it comes to gun violence or health insurance in the States, I am afraid. That’s because in South Korea, there is no gun violence, and because it is a piece of cake to go and see doctors in Korea. I feel that to go to see doctors in Korea is as easy and cheap as to have a cup of coffee at a cafe.

5. Taste of Liberation Theology

Carefully, I would like to introduce one particular theology that I have learned in seminary. This theology is not easy and not comfortable to digest in many ways. I am still chewing many

parts of this theology in my mouth. Sometimes, it is sweet and sometimes, it is bitter. Have you heard of Liberation Theology? Liberation Theology comes from Latin American Catholic theologians in the 1950s and 1960s. Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Peruvian theologian and Catholic priest, is one of the founders. His popular concept is “preferential option for the poor.” In other words, God cares and loves the poor more. One time when I was cutting an avocado, I cut my thumb. While I cared about the whole of my body, at that time, it felt like all I had was my bleeding thumb. This one tiny part became the most important. Likewise, as the poor need more care and love, God loves the poor more and first, rather than God loves all equally. Does this make sense to you? Do you like it? Then, how about this critique? This is what one Brazilian Catholic Archbishop, Hélder Câmara said, “When I give food to the poor, they call me a saint. When I ask WHY they are poor, they call me a communist.” How does this sound to you? Is this a right critique? Have you heard of this kind of critique before towards you? If you receive these kinds of critiques, please remember that John the Baptist was in prison, and Jesus Christ was on the cross.

6. Joyful Shouting, Merry Christmas!

We feed the homeless every Monday. There is a joy in our cooking and serving hands, and no one can take this joy away from us. But how about asking why they became homeless? Is it joyful or uncomfortable? Are we joyful when we change the causes of homelessness in our society? We have many joys in our lives and in our church. I do not want us to stop here. I want

us to bring our good news, our joy to many people in our community. I want to hear the joyful shouting from the homeless, the poor, and the children. Let us make merry Christmas together!

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, with your coming to the earth, we are so joyful. Because of you, we are healed, grown up, and helping others. Please use us to bring your joy to many people in our community, Gilroy. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Questions.

1. What is your joy, especially in Advent?
2. What do you want to share about this church?
3. How about tasting the liberation theology? Sweet or bitter?