

# An Order of Worship for the Home

December 13, 2020  
Joy! – week 3



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*This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God’s grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.*

*There is an “offering prayer” included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org) to give online.*

## Invocation

Reader 1: Advent is a season of anticipation.

Reader 2: We look ahead with joy!

Reader 1: We expect to meet our King and Savior.

Reader 2: We look ahead with joy!

Reader 1: We sing of his blessings and his love.

Reader 2: We look ahead with joy!

Reader 1: We gather this Advent in the name of our God...

Reader 2: Who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Together: Amen. Joy to the world!

## Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*We light a third candle on the Advent wreath during this week. If you have a wreath at home, this is an appropriate time to light it. The following is a traditional prayer for the Third Sunday in Advent:*

Lord, hear our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our hearts by your gracious appearing; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

### **Psalm 98:2-3**

<sup>2</sup>The Lord has made known his salvation;  
he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations.  
<sup>3</sup>He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness  
to the house of Israel.  
All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.

### **Confession & Absolution**

*Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.*

Christian Confessing: I admit my lack of joy. I have hidden my joy out of embarrassment. I have tempered my joy in order to fit in. At other times, I've been ashamed of my sins, and lost sight of joy. I've also encountered sorrow, which has swallowed up my joy. When my joy has run short for any of these reasons, I have too often sought quick fixes and temporary relief. Forgive me, Lord, and grant me true joy. "Restore to me the joy of your salvation." (Psalm 51:12)

Christian Responding: Your God knows your sorrow, your hurts, and your sins. Yet, your God loves you with an everlasting love. He hears your prayer, and he's already answered by sending his Son, Jesus. Because of his death and resurrection, you are forgiven! By faith, you share in the true joy of his new life. His love is your joy, and by grace your life declares "Joy to the world!"

Together: Amen.

### **John 1:1-18**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the

life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

<sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") <sup>16</sup> For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

### Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### Message (Genesis 3:8-20)

#### **The Curse and the Cure**

Verse 3 of Joy to the World closes with the declaration, "He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found." I want us to spend some time thinking about that phrase. The goal is not learning something new, but allowing what's recalled to make us new. This message will not surprise you with an insightful

answer to a theological conundrum. If you know the story of the Bible, most everything I have to say will sound familiar.

I do hope we're able to slow down and absorb the truth of those lyrics. Those words hold both difficult reminders and wonderful good news. There is a curse. In fact, there are several curses which have fallen on creation and particularly on us as human beings. However, there are blessings which promise a cure for the curse. Jesus came to bring these blessings, and they are ours because of his life, death and resurrection. Now, we know these blessings in part, but one day we will know their full revelation and rejoice in a life apart from the curse.

*He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.*

"The curse" came to creation at The Fall. In order for us to fully grasp what this curse means, we have to remind ourselves what God has told us about his original creation.

God created a perfect world. In the creation account from Genesis we hear God himself declare the goodness of his work day after day. Finally, after giving life to Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, as the capstone of his creative work we hear his affirmation of all he had made.

*And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:31)*

You and I can't imagine it. This is the world we live in, but without a hint of imperfection. No sickness, no pain, no fear, no shame, no grumpy mornings, no burnt pizzas. Personally, I like to think there were either no mushrooms, or that they originally tasted like dark chocolate. Creation was perfect... you get the point.

That perfect world didn't last. God has an enemy; Satan. He's a fallen angel who desired to make a mess of the world God created. He disguised himself as a serpent and enticed Eve to break one of the few rules God had given. She took fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. She, in turn, encouraged Adam to do the same.

As soon as Adam and Eve did this, things changed. They suddenly realized they were naked. They had been naked all along, but now it felt wrong. Guilt had come into their experience, and shame followed closely behind.

If we're going to understand the curse and the cure, this is where it will help to slow down and work through the account in Genesis 3.

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Genesis 3:8-11)*

God knows. These are his children, and he is their heavenly Father. It's painful when a parent has to call out their child's disobedience. Parents would always prefer to hear a confession and a request for forgiveness, rather than having to point out the guilt which their child is trying to hide.

However, Adam is not ready to confess. He's cornered, but he thinks he can divert attention from himself if he can shift the blame. For her part, Eve does no better.

*The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (Genesis 3:12-13)*

Will God go along with this? Will shifting the blame be enough to shift the punishment? Adam and Eve anxiously listen as God addresses the serpent.

*The Lord God said to the serpent,  
"Because you have done this,  
cursed are you above all livestock  
and above all beasts of the field;  
on your belly you shall go,  
and dust you shall eat  
all the days of your life. (Genesis 3:14)*

So far, this sounds pretty good for Adam and Eve. God started by questioning Adam, then Eve, but now it's the serpent who's getting in trouble. This is the curse. It's starting. It's changing God's creation.

The serpent is cursed more than livestock – that’s animals which will become domesticated. The serpent is cursed more than “beasts of the field” – that’s the wildlife on earth. The serpent will remain on its belly and taste the dirt every day. Genesis says, “the dust you shall eat.” The Hebrew word for dust is *aphar*. It’s a little bit of dirt, and it will always be on the snake’s tongue.

This sounds like a curse on the snake, not on Satan, until the next verse.

*I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
and between your offspring and her offspring;  
he shall bruise your head,  
and you shall bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:14-15)*

**The curse of sin reveals an enemy.** The woman has an adversary now. In case you were wondering, enmity is the opposite of peace and harmony. (It’s not just the woman, by the way.)

The backstory of what happened in the garden includes a war in heaven. Satan rebelled against God, and the battle is raging. In this war, God chose to rescue us – his created beings. He claimed Adam and Eve, and their children, as his own. He’s given us a place with him, because there’s no neutral ground in this battle. Instead of dying as captives of Satan, God invites us to live as his children.

The woman’s offspring is the human race, but the second half of the verse brings focus to one offspring in particular. A Savior will come, and he will be the offspring of Eve. Satan – the enemy – will be undone by a human being. We know this Savior as Jesus.

“He shall bruise your head” is a reference to the work of Jesus. This is the first promise of a Savior given in Scripture. As soon as the need presented itself, God gave his Word. He would send his own Son. God would take on flesh in the form of that baby born in Bethlehem. He would live a human life, and he would eventually die at the hands of sinful human beings. That would have been a crushing blow, except that Jesus also rose from the dead. His resurrection is instead a crushing blow to our enemy, Satan. The Savior was hurt in the battle, but the sacrifice was worth it. His heel has been bruised. God may walk with a limp, but Satan has been defeated. The Lamb who has been slain is the victor.

After scolding the serpent, and providing this promise of a Savior, Adam and Eve might have thought they were off the hook. God’s love is great! His plans are wonderful! However, there’s still a consequence for creation. Sin brings a curse. We’ll wait for a Savior, and while we wait the curse is at work.

*To the woman he said,  
“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing;  
in pain you shall bring forth children.  
Your desire shall be contrary to your husband,  
but he shall rule over you.” (Genesis 3:16)*

**The curse of sin brings sorrow.** Along with the greatest joys of life, Eve is warned of great sorrows. Children are a blessing, and the child who will eventually come to save us is the greatest blessing of all. Yet, children will come at great cost – especially to mothers.

Childbearing is not only difficult, it’s dangerous. In this cursed creation, one mother dies every two minutes from complications involving pregnancy and childbirth. Before the curse of sin, God had invited Adam and Eve to “be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28), but following the curse this invitation is tainted with pain and sorrow.

Likewise, the marriage relationship of man and woman was perfect when God presented Eve to Adam. Adam celebrated their unity when he called his wife “bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh” (Genesis 2:27). Following the curse of sin, this celebrated relationship will be difficult and strained. Those relationships in life meant to bring great joy will be the relationships capable of the deepest hurt. The curse of sin brings sorrow.

But God doesn’t address Eve alone. He started his questions with Adam, and he will finish his warnings with the first of his children as well.

*And to Adam he said,  
“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife  
and have eaten of the tree  
of which I commanded you,  
‘You shall not eat of it,’  
cursed is the ground because of you;  
in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life;  
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you;  
and you shall eat the plants of the field.  
By the sweat of your face  
you shall eat bread... (Genesis 3:17-19)*

**The curse of sin brings thorns.** The earth itself bears a curse which will make daily life difficult for Adam. When God says, “cursed is the ground” there’s an ugly irony present. The Hebrew word for ground shares its root with Adam’s

name. The *adamah* is cursed because of the sin of *adam*. He was formed from the ground, and his relationship to God's creation was perfect. Now, he has cursed himself, and the ground from which he came is cursed as well.

Adam and Eve had been invited to fill the earth and subdue it. All plants were given them for food and drink. (Genesis 1:28-29) That was supposed to have happened peacefully, and gracefully, and naturally. Now that the curse of sin has marred creation, the very ground we work will work against us. Instead of receiving from the free flowing bounty of the earth, we must sweat, and toil, and strive for what we need just to survive. The curse of sin brings thorns.

The curse reveals an enemy.  
The curse brings sorrow.  
The curse brings thorns.

Here's where this leads us. In the course of dealing with the sorrow and the thorns, we lose sight of the enemy. It becomes easy to think there are many enemies. We forget who the real enemy is. We see his work in the people around us and identify them as enemies. We see the curse bringing sorrow and thorns in and through the lives of other people, and we act as if the curse was their idea. We treat them as if they are the enemy, instead of realizing they are fellow children of God struggling to make sense of this cursed creation.

God's words to Adam end with this:

*...till you return to the ground,  
for out of it you were taken;  
for you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19)*

There's a sorrowful connection to Adam's name once again. The *adam* will return to the *adamah*. But there's something else, as well. There's a reminder that the small bits of *adamah* can also be called dust. They're also called *aphar*; the taste of which will be inescapable for the enemy sentenced to crawl on his belly. Satan cannot forget who God's children are. He cannot ignore from where his defeat will come, because he will forever taste the very dust of God's creation – the stuff from which Adam and of all God's children were formed.

Don't lost sight of that. It's the hope you have as a child of Adam. It's the hope you have because Jesus was born from the line of Adam. Adam himself understood the promise. In the midst of these warnings spelling out the extent of sin's curse, he understood. He heard what God had to say about the curse of sin.

It would bring sorrow. It would bring thorns. But, in the midst of these he heard God's promise.

### **God brings the cure.**

We know Adam understood the good news because of his response. Notice how he sees the person before him in light of his hope in God's promise.

*The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. (Genesis 3:20)*

Up until now, she had no name. They were husband and wife, *ish* and *ishah*. They were called by the man's name, who was the one taken from the ground, *adam* and *adamah*. But, Adam sees hope for himself and for his wife. He knows his wife has a place in God's plan to bring a Savior. He calls her Eve, which means life.

When he looks at her he sees hope. He knows the curse which brings sorrow and thorns is present in her, but he chooses to see the cure instead. He doesn't mistake her for the enemy. He cannot do that, because he sees life in this fellow child of God.

So too, you and I see this world differently because of hope. We know the curse well. We know the curse of sin which brings sorrow and thorns. We know the people around us have been struck by this curse too. But, we also know the promise of God is working its way to fulfillment.

We know the cure. We know that a Savior has come. We know that his heel was bruised, but that's nothing compared with the crushing blow given to our enemy. God brings the cure.

We know the life God's given us in his Son, Jesus. And because we know this life, we can look at one another and see past the curse. We can celebrate the children born from the very ground God created, and we can see life in them. We see the cure overcoming the curse. We recognize the life of Christ at work in one another, and working through one another.

We do not see our neighbors as enemies, but as people afflicted by the curse and in need of the cure. We do not see brothers and sisters in Christ as secondary to ourselves, but as the very ones who bring the cure to us.

*No more let sins and sorrows grow  
Nor thorns infest the ground;*

*He comes to make his blessings flow  
Far as the curse is found,*

Amen.

### **Prayers and the Lord's Prayer**

*Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### **Revelation 22:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

### **Offering Prayer**

*If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.*

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.

Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.

Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.

Reader 2: Receive our offerings.

Together: Receive us as your own.

**Blessing** ( *Isaiah 55:12 & Numbers 6:24-26*)

Reader 1: The Word of God through his prophet, Isaiah, promises...

Reader 2: "You shall go out in joy"

Reader 1: Hold fast to that promise!

Reader 2: Hold fast to that joy!

Reader 1: The Lord bless you and keep you.

Reader 2: The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

Reader 1: The Lord look upon you with favor...

Reader 2: And give you peace.

Together: Amen.

*As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org). We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.*

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