



## CORNERSTONE REFLECTION GUIDE

### OCTOBER 27, 2024

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**Title:** Claim Joy: A Final Thought

**Preacher:** Rev. Matt Tuggle

**Scripture:** Acts 9:10-19

Throughout this sermon series, we have learned that joy is not dependent on our circumstances. But how do we claim joy in the midst of uncertainty or challenges? In Acts 9, Ananias is called by God to go find a man named Saul and minister to him. We know him today as the Apostle Paul, one of the most influential leaders in the history of the church. But at that time, he was a well-known Pharisee who persecuted Christians. Despite his concerns, Ananias obeyed and God used him to change Saul's life and the course of history. Ananias was open to what God wanted to do and put himself in a position to experience joy by simply saying, "Here I am, Lord" (Acts 9:10).

When we have to go places we don't want to go, or are asked to do things we don't want to do, or to be with people we don't want to be with, we can choose to claim joy with those three words: "Here I am." No matter where we find ourselves in this current season, this simple prayer can help center us and make us available to what God might want to do in our lives.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. What stuck out to you about this sermon? Was there an idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. Read Acts 9:10-19 together. What do you think it took for Ananias to follow God's direction to go to Saul, given Saul's reputation? What might this teach us about staying open to God's direction, even in uncertain situations?

3. Learning from the example of Ananias, what are some practical ways we can open ourselves to being used by God?
4. Can you think of a time when you've experienced or heard about God bringing unexpected goodness out of a difficult situation or relationship?
5. How do fear and uncertainty keep us from being joy-filled?
6. As we conclude this series on claiming joy, what are you rejoicing in during this current season?

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

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*You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.*

–Psalm 16:11

Often, we can allow fear, uncertainty, and worry to distract us from what God might want to do, robbing us of our joy. Throughout the month of October, we have been practicing simplicity (with our finances, calendars, etc.) to cultivate lives in which the Spirit yields joy in us and around us. Simplicity frees us to be present and makes room for God's presence, enriching our lives with more joyful experiences and deeper connections to God and others.

This week, focus on centering yourself in the present moment by repeating the prayer, "Here I am." Whether you are at home, in the office, or out and about, focus on the person or situation right in front of you. Don't overthink it! Just be in the moment, know that God is there with you, and allow him to have his way by being open to what he wants to do.