



## SANCTUARY REFLECTION GUIDE

October 6, 2024

---

**Title:** A Better Choice

**Preacher:** Rev. Paul Rasmussen

**Scripture:** Romans 8:28, James 1:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

As people of faith, we regularly celebrate the sacrament of Holy Communion. In its simplest form, Holy Communion is a worship moment when we memorialize Jesus' last meal with his disciples. During the meal, Jesus announces to them that He will be arrested and crucified. *Pretty heavy stuff.* Yet, Jesus gave thanks and rejoiced, even in His darkest hour, because He was confident that God would turn His suffering into victory.

In this sermon, we take a look at our next Fruit of the Holy Spirit: joy. The Greek word for joy is *chara*, and it refers to an inner gladness or delight in response to the work of God in the world. Our culture often misunderstands that joy isn't like happiness, which is dependent on our circumstances. It is a choice to believe, like Jesus did, that God has the desire and capacity to turn all of our darkness into light.

### REFLECTION QUESTIONS

---

1. What stuck out to you about this sermon? Was there an idea that was particularly meaningful or challenging for you?
2. What do you think the difference is between joy and happiness or pleasure? Where does our culture turn to find these things?
3. Have you met someone who truly exemplifies joy? What makes them stand out to you?
4. When have you experienced or witnessed God bringing goodness from adversity?

5. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 together and reflect. How can thankfulness and praise help us cultivate a life with God where joy can grow?

## WEEKLY PRACTICE

---

In October, we are focusing on cultivating a life with God where **joy** can grow within us. Throughout this month, we invite you to join us in praying this simple prayer, from Romans 15:13, each day:

*God of hope,  
Fill me with all joy and peace as I trust in you,  
so that I may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
Amen.*

Before you pray, spend a few moments in silence to quiet your mind. As you pray, think about what these words mean for you. In what areas of your life do you need God's joy, peace, and hope?