

CITY LG June 15-16, 2024

Today's Bible Story: Build Your Kingdom Here (Ezra and the Rebuilding of the Temple) • *Ezra 3:10-13*

Today's Bottom Line: Celebrate each step of the way.

Monthly Memory Verse: *A cheerful heart makes you healthy. But a broken spirit dries you up.*
Proverbs 17:22 (NirV)

WORSHIP

My God

Wake

Have kids get into their small groups Before you start Large Groups.

SLIDE: Theme

Hi, friends! Today is a great day to be here in the City because it's time to Start the Party! If you're excited to be here today, give a friend a high five like this. (*Demonstrate.*)

This summer we're celebrating the good news about Jesus and talking about how we can find joy!

SLIDE: Virtue

Remember, joy is about **choosing to celebrate what God is doing.**

SLIDE: Theme

Joy is about more than just being happy because something good happened to us. We can have joy in the good times AND in the tough times too . . . because our joy is based on our relationship with God. We can find joy when we remember how much God loves us, and how God sent Jesus FOR us.

I think it's pretty amazing how God created us to live with joy—as we read in our Memory Verse for this month, Proverbs 17:22.

SLIDE: Memory Verse

A cheerful heart makes you healthy.

But a broken spirit dries you up. (Proverbs 17:22, NirV)

Before we go any farther I have a question and I want you to circle up in your small group and spend a few minutes answering this: **What are some things in your life right now that bring you joy?** Go ahead and discuss this in your group...

Large group leader should walk around listening to groups as they answer this. Give them a couple of minutes.

In today's story, we'll look at an example of how God's people found joy every STEP of the way. (*Take a step.*)

When we look back at the beginning of the Bible, we see how God created an amazing world, including people. When people turned away from God, the world was broken. Still, God had a plan to bring us back into relationship. God chose a man named Abraham and promised to bless the entire world through Abraham's family line.

Abraham's family became known as the Israelites, or the Jewish people. Over time, they grew in number and became a great nation. But over and over again, they turned away from God and tried to do things their own way. Eventually, they were captured and taken away to other lands. Some of them ended up being taken captive by the Babylonian Empire.

Even then, God promised, through the prophet Jeremiah, that after 70 years, the Jewish people who had been taken captive by the Babylonians would be able to come home again.

Let's see what happened next...

VIDEO: Bible Story

When God's people got to Jerusalem, there was a LOT of work to do. But the people were full of joy as they built the altar and then the foundation of the temple. They worked on this big project, one step at a time . . . and they did it all to honor God! They celebrated each step of the way.

That's what we need to remember. Check this out:

VIDEO: Bottom Line

SLIDE: Bottom Line

Celebrate each step of the way.

When we decide to follow Jesus, we have the gift of the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit fills us with joy so we can celebrate when we see how God is working in all kinds of different ways.

We just need to pay attention and choose to live each day with a joyful attitude. We know that God loves us and is always with us. So when things are good in our lives . . . or even when we face tough challenges . . . we can STILL find joy because of the way God is working all around us. We can trust God no matter what and believe that God is always there to help us!

Let's pray and talk to God about that now.

SLIDE: Theme Background

PRAY

STORYTELLER: "God, You are so good and so faithful! You provided for Your people and helped them rebuild the temple foundation and then the temple in Jerusalem. Help us to remember and celebrate all that You've done for Your people throughout history, and all that You've done for us today. Please remind us to stop and say thank You . . . and to celebrate the ways that You're always working in our lives. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

OFFERING

We've been raising money for a local charity with our offering. Does anyone remember what it is? Yep...Morning Star Mission. It's a mission right here in Joliet, IL that helps people who are struggling financially. If you brought your offering, go ahead and put it in the container. Let's take a look at this video of a family of 6 who lost their home and needed help.

VIDEO: Family of 6 live in car

SLIDE: Theme

What a great mission to support. Morning Star changes lives! See what you can do this week to raise some money for this awesome mission.

CG: Summer JAM Slide

It's almost time for Summer Jam! It's coming up very soon and we're so excited to invite you to these 3 nights jam-packed with FUN and Adventure! You won't want to miss it. Tell whoever brought you that you need to visit the Summer Jam Tent after our time together today to sign up and get your T-shirt!

****AT YOUR COORDINATOR'S DIRECTION, YOU WILL EITHER DISMISS TO SMALL GROUP OR DO ACTIVITIES TOGETHER.**