

# ALLEY Rundown July 6-7, 2024

**Today's Bible Story:** Tidings of Comfort and Joy (Shepherds and Angels) • *Luke 2:8-20*

**Today's Key Question:** Who do you know who could use some joy?

**Today's Bottom Line:** Jesus brings joy to the world.

**Monthly Memory Verse:** *Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful!*  
Philippians 4:4 (NIRV)

**PRE-SERVICE VIDEOS:** *Dude Perfect*

**SLIDE:** *Theme Background*

What's up, everybody? It's so good to see you. As I walked in, I couldn't help but smile. It is such an exciting time of the year. Summer is always such a fun time of year! I love being outside, grilling dinner with the fam, and swimming at the community pool!

What about you? What's something you look forward to this time of year?

*Have several kids answer the question. Affirm each response and repeat it so the crowd can hear.*

Not bad! I'd add stargazing, Ice Pops, and beaches to that list! Sometimes, though, even the best times go horribly wrong.

*Share a personal summertime story where everything goes wrong. Use the following as a guide.*

As a kid, my family made an annual trip to the beach. There was nothing I looked forward to more than that. It was so fun. The crashing waves, Frisbee on the white sandy beaches in the warm sun . . . and we got to go every year! It was the pinnacle of the entire summer. There was endless, fun body surfing, catching crabs with my net, or looking for big shells.

Has anyone ever done things like that?

*Pause to take a few responses.*

I know, right? It's the best! However, I remember one trip being memorable for all the wrong reasons. Our typical routine was to rush to the beach as soon as we arrived at the rental house. All the unpacking would happen after the first dip in the ocean. In the rush, though, I forgot to put on sunscreen.

Yeah. This was a mistake. Not only that, after only about a half hour in the water, I felt a sharp, stinging pain on my shoulder. Hurriedly, I got out of the ocean wincing. Dad knew right away a jellyfish had stung my shoulder. Instead of playing, my parents told me to sit out of the water to avoid more agony. A short time later, mom made me a sandwich. As I ate, I noticed more and more seagulls flying close overhead. Before I was halfway done with my lunch, a bird swooped down and stole my sandwich right out of my hand!

Fast forward about two hours, and I've got no sandwich, a stung shoulder, and now my legs are red hot with sunburn. Best. Vacation. Ever.

If you thought all of this put me in a horrible mood . . . you're right. I was mad. Grouchy. My attitude started ruining the rest of the day for everyone. I'd like to say the trip greatly improved along with my attitude, but it didn't. The entire trip was a huge disappointment. Furthermore, my mood and my attitude affected the rest of my family. Nobody wanted to be around me because I was grumpy.

Has anyone else had something like this happen? You've got something amazing planned and it all turns south? *(Ask for a show of hands)* Yeah. It happens to all of us at some point.

So, what do you do? How do you respond? When you're mad that things aren't working out, plans are ruined, or stupid seagulls eat your sandwich, how do you get out of that funk? It's difficult, isn't it? You want the whole world to feel like you feel . . . mad, frustrated, and crabby. Your attitude stinks, and it's affecting everyone else. So, what can you do to switch things around?

Great questions. But rather difficult ones too. Sometimes when you're mad, you want to stay mad. Joy seems a million miles away! Thankfully we've got some guidance this morning. The writers of the Bible experienced God's goodness and guidance firsthand and were inspired by God to write about them so others could learn to trust God, too! That's why each week we take a look at how what we read in the Bible can help us trust God and discover more about how to live by following Jesus. This week is no different—let's head there now!

**VIDEO: *The So and So Show* (13:08)**

The birth of Jesus was pretty amazing, right?! God sent Jesus to earth to save us from our sins and to restore our relationship with God.

I love how the shepherds found joy in this story—or more accurately, joy found them. While there's no way to know if joy was difficult to find for shepherds during this time, judging by what we know of shepherds in Bible times, chances are their lives weren't the greatest.

When things are low, when things go wrong, it's hard to find joy. It's hard to get out of that mood. But just like God did with the shepherds . . . God is ready to bring you some good news!

You may not own a flock of sheep or be visited by an inflatable flamingo choir, but joy can be found wherever and whenever. All you need to do is look and listen.

No matter how average or difficult your day is going, you can always find joyful news—like the shepherds did. When Jesus came into this world, He brought joy. Now all you have to do is let Him into yours! And once you do, your attitude will change. And that joyful attitude will start to spread to those around you!"

The shepherds also demonstrated what we should do with our joy. Instead of keeping it to themselves, they attempted to spread joy to others by telling them about Jesus. When we remember who Jesus is and what He did, every moment is an opportunity to share God's love and spread a little joy. Our Memory Verse for this month comes from Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul wanted to remind the believers who lived there to be joyful because of Jesus. Here it is—Philippians 4:4:

**SLIDE: *Memory Verse***

*Always be joyful because you belong to the Lord. I will say it again. Be joyful! (Philippians 4:4, NIV)*

As we prepare to spend time with our small groups soon, I have a question for everyone to consider.

**SLIDE: *Key Question***

**Who do you know who could use some joy?** In the summer, we're often surrounded by family and friends. Not all of them are probably feeling joy. Let's pray and ask God to help us find joy in all situations—but to also spread that joy to those who need it!"

*Leader leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard.*

**SLIDE: *Theme***

**CHECK THE TIME:** There should be 20-25 minutes for small group. If LG is running late, skip the next part and just have kids bring up their money.

**OFFERING:**

**SLIDES:** *Hope Mobility 1-3*

Starting this week we are raising money for an organization called Hope Mobility. It was founded by Michael Panther who grew up as a child with a disability in Sudan. Hope Mobility collects and distributes wheelchairs in Africa while teaching families and communities to care for and to include people with disabilities. Our focus will be raising money for wheelchairs for kids. Each pediatric wheelchair costs \$275 and we will see how many wheelchairs we can purchase to help kids in Africa!

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