

# *the* Spirit of Christmas

THE FATHER'S HOUSE

**Thieves of Joy**  
**Pastor Jon Lorenzo 12.14.2025**

## **USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE**

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

### ***[Luke 2:8-14] ESV***

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

***Joy= An attitude that God's people adopt, because of God's love and promises, not because of their circumstances***

### ***[Philippians 4:4-5] ESV***

Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

***[Philippians 4:6] ESV***

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

***The 3 Thieves of Joy***

***1. A Lack of Prayer***

***“Anxiety and prayer are more opposed to each other than Fire and Water”  
-JA Bengel***

***[Philippians 4:7] ESV***

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

***[Philippians 4:8] ESV***

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

***2. A fixation on the negative***

***[Philippians 4:8] JUDT (Jon’s Upside-Down Translation)***

“Finally, brothers, whatever is false, whatever is dishonest, whatever is unfair, whatever is impure and sketchy, whatever makes you sad, whatever is reprehensible, if there is anything bad in the world, if there is anything worthy of your slander, focus on these things!”

***3. A disconnect from the SOURCE of Jesus and the STORY of Jesus***

***[Philippians 4:9] ESV***

What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

***[Psalm 105:26-27, 43] NIV***

He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them, his wonders in the land of Ham. He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy.

***[Luke 2:10-11] ESV***

And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

***“Christian Joy is a profound decision of faith and hope in the power of Jesus’ own life and love”.  
-Tim Mackie***

## Key Points:

### 3-Thieves of Joy:

1. **A Lack of Prayer**
2. ***A fixation on the negative***
3. ***A disconnect from the SOURCE of Jesus and the STORY of Jesus***

## Applications for the Week:

What would you discover this week if you were to keep a short log of how you speak about one constant stress (job, marriage, finances, politics). Where do negative patterns appear? What would happen if you were to pick one of the Philippians 4:8 categories and write a one-sentence truth to say aloud when the negative pattern starts?

## Discussion Questions:

1. What is the angel's core announcement to the shepherds in Luke 2, and why does it matter that this "good news of great joy" is first given to the least likely people?
2. In Philippians 4:4–6 Paul links rejoicing and prayer. What sequence or practical connection does Paul give between "rejoice" and "do not be anxious...pray about everything"?
3. Philippians 4:8 lists kinds of things to think about. Which of those categories (true, honorable, just, pure, lovely, commendable, excellent, praiseworthy) do you most often neglect, and how does a "fixation on the negative" show up in your everyday speech and habits?
4. Paul describes his chains as sharing in Christ's path. How does seeing suffering as participation in Jesus' story change what suffering looks like for a believer?
5. How does Paul's command "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" function as a spiritual discipline for someone overwhelmed by fear and worry? What would it mean for that person to "pray big" rather than offer small, surface-level prayers?
6. What does it mean for your "confession" or habitual speech to become the default playback of your life? How would regularly practicing Philippians 4:8 categories reshape decision-making, relationships, and emotional resilience?
7. If you feel trapped in "Egypt" (addiction, shame, destructive habit), what is one immediate next step you will take this month toward freedom (confess to a trusted friend, begin counseling, join an accountability group, etc.)? Who is someone you can ask to help hold you accountable?