

Advent 2017: Joy - Philippians 4:4-7

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[0 : 00] Something I want to say before we get started is I'm really, really, really thankful for the way we've talked about joy so far this morning. With Nathan, with what he read, and with the songs that Jordan and the band have led, I think it's really, really important for us to remember where we were at apart from Christ.

Remember our worthlessness and our state in hopeless sin for us to understand the joy that Christ brings. And so I think that has been really encouraging to me this morning. I hope as we look through our text this morning that it will be the same right now. So Luke chapter 2 is not going to be our main text this morning, but I do want to start off with part of it in the typical Christmas story that we read.

Just to talk about how the Lord really does bring great joy in his coming. And so let's look at verse 8 of chapter 2 here in Luke. It says, And suddenly there is with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased.

Amen. So this is something that we typically read quite often at Christmas. And it's true that the idea of joy really floods the Christmas season. Unbelievers think they have joy in this season.

[1 : 49] They think they have it through spending time with their family or receiving a bunch of material gifts. But believers, we see this good news of great joy that is to be to all people.

That salvation that the Lord is bringing. And so this morning, I want to help us get a glimpse of a few different aspects of that joy that Christ has brought to us.

In his life, his death, his resurrection, even in his current reign, and in his coming for the second time that we're looking forward to. So I want to go to probably the biggest passage we look at for this, and that's Philippians 4.

So turn with me to Philippians 4. This will be our main text this morning. I must say before I get going that preaching on a topic is much more difficult for me than being given a text to preach on. So be praying for me this morning, and if the Lord will use this for our upbuilding. Philippians 4, verses 4 through 7.

[3 : 00] Before we read it, I'd like to remind us, as Nathan does every Sunday, that this is God's word to us. It is written for his glory and for our good. And we will do well to it, to listen to it, in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

So just picking up in verse 4. It says, Rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I will say rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving. Let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen. So this is one of those big go-to texts on joy. And I'd just like to walk through it a bit. And just to show a lot of the aspects of joy, because there are a lot of different things about it that are pretty incredible for us as believers.

We won't stay here the whole time, but this is where we'll spend the majority of our time. So to be clear about how I'm going to structure this, I'd like to tell you kind of where we're going. So I have five different aspects of joy that I want us to look at.

[4 : 07] The first one being our true source of joy. The second being the means of our joy. The third being a thief of our joy. The fourth being the outflows of our joy.

And fifth being the relentlessness of our joy. Don't worry, I'll say all those again for those that are taking notes. But starting off with, I think it would be a good idea to define joy before we get into it.

Way back in the day when Noah Webster was making dictionaries, he used to cite scripture references for all of his definitions. And this is one that's way back in the day when that was the case.

He defined joy as a delight of the mind from the consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good. It's a delight of the mind from the consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good.

Piper defined it as the following. He said that Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul produced by the Holy Spirit as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world.

[5 : 17] I'm going to read back over that one. A good feeling in the soul produced by the Holy Spirit as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world.

The word we see here in our text says rejoice. That's the most common way to translate the Greek word that is used here. In some other spots throughout scripture, it's translated as to be glad or simply translated as joy.

We see this same word throughout the New Testament in the context of a lot of times when people are healed, people coming to faith. And even in those passages where we see believers rejoicing in that they were glad to suffer in the same way that our Savior did.

That's a really common word often tied to those. And so looking at those three, the way it's used in scripture, the way Piper defines it, and the way that Webster defined it, we can clearly see that it is a good feeling that follows something we are considering.

We're thinking about something. It's a good feeling that we have in the light of that. It can be something that's happening now or it can be something that is happening in the future. So let's talk through that and we'll see how it works in our text.

[6 : 31] So both of those definitions are very, very similar. Both of them are feelings. Feelings are something that we can't control. We can do a lot to try to influence our feelings, but ultimately there's a lot that is just out of our control.

We can't snap our fingers and make ourselves feel a certain way. We can definitely do things to influence it, but we can't. We can't change it. So where does it come from?

Where does that feeling come from if it's not something that we're directly causing? Where does it come from? So that gets us to our first point. First point is the true source of our joy.

I think we all know what this is. It's pretty clear and obvious in the text. It says to rejoice in the Lord always, to rejoice in the Lord. What I want us to do is think about how we get to that and why that is true.

So the true source of our joy is to rejoice in the Lord. Webster said that it comes from a consideration of the present or assured approaching possession of a good. So he's saying that it comes from looking around and considering what is going on, maybe what's going on now or maybe what we think is going to happen in the future, what we're assured of.

[7 : 44] If he used that word, Piper is super quick to emphasize that it is something that is produced by the Holy Spirit. And how it comes to us is by seeing the work of Christ, both in his word and in the world.

So coming from those two perspectives, I think we can clearly see that, yes, it is a feeling. And it's a feeling that we get as we look to that hope that we have in Christ that we spoke about last week.

And I think it's a really good thing to look to hope, to see joy. So I'd like to go back a little bit and think about what Nathan preached on, on hope last Sunday.

And so I think it's really important with hope to remember our hopelessness without Christ. We all know it. We try to suppress it, to not think about it, to forget it, to ignore it.

But we all know it. We know all of our natural tendencies apart from Christ. We know that apart from God, we always seek our own good and not the good of others. We know that we'll act out in lust.

[8 : 43] We know that we'll get angry quickly over really silly things. We know that we'll always try to build up our own pride and tear down others. We know that we'll be anxious about things that we don't need to be worrying about at all.

And we know something else. We know that because of this, we deserve death and hell. We're completely hopeless without Christ. We know that we can do nothing to change that.

We can't change our nature. We're stuck sinning and sinning and sinning, and we can't do anything about that on our own. We're always going to make the choice to sin. We don't have any ability to make the choice to not sin.

But we do have hope. And so let's remember where that hope is coming from. Turn with me to Ephesians 2. Ephesians 2. So this is one of the texts that Nathan referenced last week in the hope sermon.

I think it'll be really helpful to look at it a bit more to remind of that hope and see that joy. I'll look at verses 1 through 10 here. Picking up in verse 1, it says, And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work and the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

[10:17] But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

This is one of my favorite texts. This is something that brings me joy. I bet a lot of us are feeling that right now. We're feeling a delight of the mind from considering this text.

We're feeling a good feeling in the soul produced by the spirit as he caused us to see the beauty of Christ so clear in this text. So let's look at this text a little bit.

Those first three verses, we're described as dead. Following the course of this world, following the devil, following the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. We're just carrying out the desires of the body, the desires of the mind.

[11:34] We're just aimlessly and thoughtlessly doing things. Just going about off our desires, not caring about whether they're good or bad, or right or wrong. We're just following others, not making good choices at all.

We don't even have that ability. We even are told that by nature we are children of wrath. And then something I really like after that, Paul then reminds us that that's where everybody's at. We're all children of wrath without God.

Before Christ, that's all of us. And then we get really excited. We get that good feeling down in our soul when we see those next two really precious words. It says, but God.

But God. And suddenly we have hope. Suddenly we remember Christ. Suddenly we have that good feeling, that joy. The Lord reminds us that because of his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again.

And this happened while we were still dead in our sin. Nothing we did earned us this favor, but just by his great mercy, he decides to give it to us. He gives us grace and undeserved kindness.

[12:38] How great is that? How precious is that grace? When we have done nothing good, the Lord just gives it to us. It's incredible.

We could have done nothing to fix our situation, and we're worth nothing or by nature useless. But the Lord in his grace has shown us mercy, has made us his own.

So what have we just done? What have we done in thinking through our Ephesians passage and just thinking through all that? We have done exactly what Philippians 4 commanded us to, to rejoice in the Lord, to look to his word and see how we can have joy in that.

That's exactly what Philippians 4 is telling us to do, to rejoice in the Lord. So I think we can all say that the Lord is our true source of joy. The Lord is our true source of joy.

So, notes are messed up. So, yes, we can all say that the Lord is our true source of joy. Next, let's look at the means of joy.

[13:44] So, second one is the means of joy. I think Piper's definition sums it up really well. We get joy by savoring Christ's work as we read it in his word and as we see his work in the world.

We have joy by remembering things that the Lord has done, by remembering what he's currently doing, and by remembering what he has promised to do and that we are assured that he will do. So, I'm going to talk through this in those two ways.

So, we'll start off with the word. How we see joy in the word. So, the Lord uses scripture so much in causing us to rejoice. For me, a super clear passage was that one we just looked at in Ephesians 2.

We just see a super clear presentation of the gospel that makes it so clear of our hopeless state and then our redeemed state. So much joy in that. When we remember what our state was and what our state is now.

In so many other passages, we see joy. When we see others coming to faith. Acts was beautiful to go through. I see so many people just coming to faith in the Lord. That should bring us so much joy. [14:53] Or passages about the great holiness of God when we consider who God is. Or passages of cries to the Lord in distress in the Psalms where we realize that people have been in the same boat that we are in.

Or passages about the great future that we see of enjoying the Lord forever in the life to come. So, no matter where we look in scripture, rightly understanding it will bring us joy.

No matter what type of scripture it is, it should bring us joy when we rightly understand it. So, so much of our joy is affected by what we set our minds on.

So, look in a few verses down in Philippians at verse 8. Look at verse 8. It says, 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, now think about these things.

So, as we set our minds to his word and these things that are in the world that are worthy of praise, the Lord will fill us up with joy. So, I'm moving to our second meaning of joy in the world.

[16:06] Seeing this, seeing this this morning with us singing songs together in praise of our Savior is a huge way we see Christ's work in the world. All of us being redeemed by his grace, all of us filthy, dead sinners, turned into new, precious nature with a restored image of God.

That is something huge that we see Christ's work in the world at the present. I remember hearing stories at community groups so many different times of people sharing their faith with people, and those people coming to faith, and later learning about them as they've become a part of our fellowship.

That's Christ's work in the world that is bringing us joy. Those same types of stories that we see in acts of people coming to faith, we see that now. We see that in the world around us, and how precious that is, and how much joy that should bring us.

These are all the Lord's work in the world, and they should bring us great joy. Third point is a thief of joy. A thief of joy.

So there are so, so, so, so, so many different thieves of joy, but I just want to focus on the one that's given in our text this morning. Look down in verse 6.

[17:18] We can see that that thief is anxiety. Anxiety. This is probably the thief that hurts me the most. This is something that I've had to continue to preach to myself constantly.

Some of y'all that know me really, really well know that I really like to always have a plan. I'm a person who does well with structure. I like to know what I'm going to be doing six months from now, right now.

I know when I'm doing something, how I'm going to do it, everything about it. Something that's been really hard for me, like, because of that, has been playing the Christmas Eve service.

I've talked to, like, a lot of brothers and sisters about it. It's a new thing for me, Jordan, and Alex.

There's a lot of unknowns. I don't like unknowns. That is something I don't do well with.

Like I said, I want to know what is going on six months from now, right now. And so I've struggled and fretted and worried and I've been anxious about little details that in the end I know will work out and in the end really don't actually matter that much.

[18:24] Sure, my personality and nature makes me more likely to struggle with those things, but what is the root of that? The root is sin. The root is sin. It's anxiety.

It's worry. I'm failing to trust the Lord that He will work out all the situations for our good and I'm putting way too much weight on little things that have no eternal significance rather than submitting them in trust to the Lord.

I have to battle this sin constantly. I've had to repent and cast my cares upon the Lord. I even had to apologize to some people who I know were directly affected by my sin. Anxiety has been a big thief of my joy.

It was making me forget the past of how God has brought us to this point, what He has done on the cross to redeem us. It was making me forget the present, how God is currently working out every situation for our good.

It was making me forget the future, that we'll spend eternity with Him and all these circumstances will make sense that the only real thing that matters of our current circumstances are bringing glory to the Lord.

[19 : 30] Verse 6 says, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. So Paul, by the Spirit, is reminding us here that anxiety is going to kill our joy.

He's also reminding something really important for me to see is that part of being reasonable is not being anxious. Think about that for a minute.

Part of being reasonable is not being anxious. When we remember that our Lord is Lord of the universe, all-knowing and all-powerful, that He's also our Father, He's loving, He's intimate, He's gracious, there is no room for us to be anxious.

The Lord is on our side. Who can be against us? It is God who justifies, who is there to condemn. This life is so fleeting, so why do we value our circumstances so much?

So fleeting, so why do we value our circumstances so much? It is completely unreasonable to be anxious. Paul is echoing the teaching of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount here.

[20 : 36] So turn with me to Matthew 6. I preached on this text here about a year ago.

And I think it'll be really helpful for us to look back at this because anxiety is such a big thief of joy. I just think it's really important, has been for me, to fight anxiety in order to gain joy.

And so let's look at Matthew 6. We're going to look at verses 25 to 34. Here it says, Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.

Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spend. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

[21 : 56] But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear?

For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. So here in this text, Jesus lists off reason after reason after reason for us not to be anxious. So many different things. He shows us how pointless it is.

He shows us how ridiculous it is for us to let that steal our joy. So when I preached this text a long time ago, I had seven reasons that Jesus gave to not be anxious and trust in him.

I want to really briefly look through those because I think it's really important that we see the logic behind why anxiety is so bad. The first one was, life is much greater than food or clothing.

[23 : 02] The early part of this passage talks about worrying about food and clothing. That shows one of two things. It either shows that we are not trusting in the Lord to provide for our physical needs, or it shows that we are caring way too much about what people think of us.

One of those two things. Other people's opinions should grow strangely dim when we think about our Savior. Cares of this world should look so small in light, in light of our eternal joy and what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do.

Jesus' second reason that he gave us to not be anxious and trust in him was we can only do so much. So often we try to do everything. This is a bad tendency of mine that I've had to fight.

I try to fix everything and realize that when I can't, I get really, really, really frustrated. We have to learn that God is in complete control and we're just not. We can't do everything.

When we try to do everything and come to the end of ourselves, we're left worried and anxious and we're refusing to give things up to the Lord and to take joy in the fact that God is our Father and he is our God.

[24 : 11] We can only do so much. Third one was that worrying doesn't fix anything. As we often get so worried about situations going on in our lives, we lose our joy and hurt others with our sin.

But the anxiety doesn't fix anything at all. Spurgeon said of anxiety, Anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows, but only empties today of its strength.

It doesn't fix anything. Another thing that's super clear here is that God values his people and therefore provides. God values his people and therefore provides.

We can trust our Lord because he provides for birds and grass and remember who we are to him. We are his holy nation, his peculiar people that he has brought about so that we can proclaim his excellencies.

Will he not much more provide for us? So there's no reason to be anxious about our needs. Then I said that anxiety characterizes unbelievers. Unbelieving people are constantly worried about what other people think of them or how they're going to be able to live out the American dream focused on material things.

[25 : 24] And they might even worry about some good things like how they can best provide for their family or how they can eat healthy. But they do this so often out of a heart of anxiety, a heart of worry.

Anxiety characterizes unbelievers. And verse 34 says, Tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Don't ruin today by worrying about tomorrow.

Each day has enough trouble for its own. Trust in the Lord and do good. We can have joy in his completed work and its realities for the past, the present, and the future.

And the last one that I really want to stick with a bit today is that anxiety is sin. Anxiety is sin. From this passage here in Philippians and this passage in Matthew, we have in one Jesus telling us not to be anxious.

And then in Philippians, we have Paul reminding us of Jesus' teaching not to be anxious. So what are we doing when we're continuing in our anxiety? We're sinning.

[26 : 32] I can't count the number of times that I've heard something along the lines of, I know the Lord tells us not to be anxious, but... I've heard that out of my own mouth. By the way we've started that statement, we've admitted that we are breaking a command of our Lord.

It's really dangerous. You may have also heard people say, I'm not anxious about this. I'm just really, really worried about it. What is anxiety? Right?

What is anxiety? It just means to be really worried about something. That's all it means. Okay? It could easily be translated, don't be worried. Okay?

So when we're overly worried about something, we are in sin. So I'd love to go on and on about the flaws of anxiety, but this is not a sermon primarily about anxiety.

It is about joy. So in summary, many, many reasons are given by the Lord to not be anxious and to trust in Him. When we're anxious, our mind is not set on the joy we have in the Lord, and we're in active disobedience towards Him.

[27 : 38] So anxiety brings our focus from the Lord, in His providence, where we have our joy, and it puts it back on the cares of this world. So when we conquer this thief, we'll be able to see it.

We'll be able to know it. We'll have that joy, and people will be able to see it. Because when we have joy, it's going to flow out from us. So that brings us to the fourth point, the outflows of joy. The outflows of joy. So I have just two outflows here. And the first one I'd like to talk about is peace. Verse 7, back in Philippians 4, says that, And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

So what this verse is saying needs to happen before this peace comes, is to rejoice in the Lord, and replace our anxiety with prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving.

[28 : 42] As we do this, this peace that is not based on our circumstances, but based on an act of trust in the Lord, will come about. This will seem bizarre to unbelievers. That's why it says it surpasses all understanding.

So though everything around us may be falling apart, the circumstances around us seem just impossible to go through, we can have peace because of this great joy we have in what the Lord has done for us.

So we'll talk about that a little bit more later. But the second outflow of joy that I'd like to talk about is speech. Speech. When we love something and have great joy because of it, we are going to talk about it.

As Matthew 12, 34 says, out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. We're going to talk about the things we love. So thinking about my life over the past couple of days, I really like snow.

Snow is something that I really enjoy. I like when it's falling. I like having snowball fights. I like building snowmen. I like watching weather predictions. I like making weather predictions.

[29 : 48] I like not going to school when it's snowing. I like driving my truck in the snow. I like walking in the snow. I really like that sound it makes when you step on it and it's crunching.

I like everything about snow. So on Friday morning about 4 a.m., I woke up and I knew that the snow might be to Cleveland.

So I was really excited that it might be snowing outside right now. So I looked out the window and sure enough, it had not. So I was really sad. And so I grabbed my laptop and I went and I looked at all of the forecasts.

And at that point, they were getting a little bit more accurate. A little bit, but some more accurate. I was so excited. They were upping all of the snow predictions. I was so excited. So I went and got back in bed and Margaret turned over and I like could not hold my excitement.

I was like, Margaret, Margaret, they've upped all the predictions. And she's so frustrated with me. She's like, I'm sleeping and like grunted.

[30 : 49] And snow, I'm so excited right now. So the morning went on and we still had work. We're teachers in Forsyth County.

And throughout the day, I think I was way more excited than my students were. Way more excited. They had a test that day. And so some of them were getting done with it. And I would have my phone out and go show them my phone with the weather predictions.

And then like sometimes like point out the window, like there's so much snow out there right now. But I was so excited. So I wrote quite a bit of the sermon on Friday night while watching the snow falling.

And Margaret got to the point where she was making fun of me because I was so distracted by it. I would look up every 30 seconds just to see if it was still snowing. All right. So all that being said, all that being said, I think y'all are probably seeing my point by now.

How is my love for snow proven? I talked about it constantly. It was like something I was dwelling on quite a bit. Okay.

[31 : 54] I really, really like it. And so I talked about it. You might even say that I had a joy associated with the snow. So I talked about it. Wanted to learn more about it. I shared things about it with everyone I know.

People got annoyed with the snow talk from me. So is this true of us with the Lord? Do we talk about the Lord constantly? Are we excited to learn more about him? Are we overwhelmed with joy when we hear more about his work?

Grab your bulletin. You'll see the weekly Spurgeon quote. So it says, This should make us question a little bit.

What do we rejoice in? What do we find the most pleasure in knowing? What do we talk about the most? Out of the overflow of our heart, our mouth will speak.

What do we talk about? What do we dwell on? Where is our joy at? Because we're going to be speaking about it. Something really cool about rejoicing in the Lord is that the more we do it, the more joy we will find in it.

[33 : 11] Turn with me to 1 John 1. I want us to look at the first four verses here.

It starts with, And with his son, Jesus Christ.

And we're writing these things so that our joy may be complete. So looking at these first four. After explaining how they're preaching Christ to these people, they say why they are doing it.

Look at verse four. It says, Some translations have your joy there. They both make a lot of sense. As we proclaim Jesus, we'll find more and more joy in Jesus. As people hear about Jesus, they will find that true joy that they've been longing for.

[34 : 39] So our joy will flow out from us in both a mindset of peace and through speaking his name. So my last point that I'd like to bring up about joy, I think is really, really important.

It is the relentlessness of our joy. The relentlessness of our joy. So Wayne Grudem says of the Philippians 4 text, Always available.

No matter what the circumstances are. Our joy is relentless. No matter what is going on around us, we can have joy in God. Paul gives us a great example of this through his own life.

He wrote this letter to the Philippians while he was in jail. And this is what he says about his imprisonment. Look back to chapter one. Picking up in verse 12 of chapter one, it says, I want you

to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it has become known throughout the whole imperial guard and to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ.

And most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Paul has not allowed his circumstances to destroy his joy, but he's instead looking at those and seeing how the Lord is going to use them to continue to proclaim the gospel.

[36 : 32] He's using those to advance his joy. He's excited about what the Lord is doing through those circumstances, that more people are hearing the gospel and are coming to faith. We can be joyous in any situation.

Because R.C. Sproul can say it better than I can, I decided to quote him on this. He said, The command to rejoice can always be obeyed, even in the midst of conflict, adversity, and deprivation, because joy rests not on favorable circumstances, but in the Lord.

One more place I'd like you to turn, and then we will close. Turn to the Old Testament book of Habakkuk. If you're not familiar with it, it is towards the end of the Old Testament, in between Nahum and Zephaniah.

A little bit of context. So Habakkuk is an Old Testament prophet who complains to God about Judah's increasing wickedness. And Habakkuk eventually comes to terms with the fact that God is sovereign, and that his judgment is far beyond what he can see at the moment.

Part of his response to what the Lord has said in chapter 3 is really powerful. I'd like for us to read it together, and then we will pray.

[37 : 51] So verses 17 through 19 of chapter 3. It says, Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, and the fields yield no food.

The flock be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls. Yet I will rejoice in the Lord. I will take joy in the God of my salvation. God the Lord is my strength.

He makes my feet like the deer's. He makes me tread on my high places. Let's pray.