

# “Come Lord Jesus And Fill Us With Your Joy”

*Transcribed using turboscribe.ai*

*Sermon Preached: Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December 2025*

*Preacher: Pastor Jason Sander*

*Location: St Peter's Lutheran Church, Loxton*

*Sermon Text: [Isaiah 35:1-10](#)*

My friends, grace, mercy and peace to you in the name of our Lord and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Let me pray.

Loving Father, as we gather around your word, we give you thanks for your grace that comes to us. We thank you for your love, your forgiveness, the hope that we have in you. And we pray, come Holy Spirit and transform our hearts into the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ through this word. Holy Spirit, may the words that I speak, the words that I've prepared, may they be pleasing to you and for the good of your people. Amen.

Some years ago, after one of our hottest summers, I drove through a stretch of bushland in the Adelaide Hills, around like Kersbrook, Humbug scrub around and out towards Stirling and it had been just after those bushfires, around the same time as the Kangaroo Island ones I believe, ground was and trees completely scorched, black trunks stood like skeletons, silence across the charred landscape. There was no green anywhere at the, just straight after those bushfires, it felt as though the wind had given up, it was that still.

The world was colourless, lifeless, just charred down to silence. I guess it's in those times when you're driving through and you're seeing the devastation after a bushfire that you, it's easy to think nothing is coming back from this. Sometimes later on that, sometime later on that same stretch of road, I saw something I didn't expect and what we know happens too.

Tiny buds of green, pushing out from the base of blackened trees, grass forcing its way through asher, a faint, a faint shimmer of life returning, of signs of hope, a landscape anticipating the joy of restoration. Seeing these little signs of life, the anticipation of joy and the whole landscape starts feeling different, mindset changes. Thing is though, the trees, the land, it wasn't healed, well not yet, but it was alive with promise and Isaiah 35, Isaiah is riding into a landscape just like that, not because of a bushfire, because of war, invasion and this slow unravelling of God's people in that time.

Assyria had swept through the northern part of the kingdom, burning villages, tearing down homes, scattering families and down in the south, Jerusalem in Judah, it was shaking too. What was going to happen to them? The army of Assyria was coming towards them or even surrounding them potentially and everything that once felt secure now felt fragile for them and as I describe these places of natural beauty and abundance, Sharon's coastal plains, the rich slopes of Mount Carmel, the forests of Lebanon, these were the beautiful places in the time of Isaiah. You might go out for a, I'd say for a drive, maybe a chariot drive and you'd go out and you'd wonder at the beauty of the scenery before you, but they were now distant memories, they were gone.

And it's into that devastation, into that loss that Isaiah, he makes this breathtaking claim or promise, he says the deserts and the parched land will be glad, the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. And so Isaiah is saying to the people, this wasteland that you see around you, the scorched ground under your feet, the dust and ash that's blowing around you, guess what? New life is coming, healing is coming, joy is coming, God will take the most devastated places and make them bloom again, not just the promise of creation being restored, it's a promise of joy being restored. However, between this devastation and restoration there is waiting, like the present, waiting can be exhausting, maybe you've experienced that pain of waiting, frustration, anxiety, maybe you're waiting now.

Sometimes waiting can be good, learning patience, resilience, but what I'm talking about here, that pain of waiting, the waiting that wears us down, the waiting that just drains the joy from our bones, the way that makes us question whether anything green will ever break through the ash again. And see, Isaiah, he speaks into the weariness of waiting, it's like a prayer, it says strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way, say to those with fearful hearts, be strong, do not fear, your God will come, hands, knees, hearts, the parts of us that falter when we're tired or anxious, the parts of us that tremble or weaken when joy feels far away, perhaps you can see scorched places in your own life, or fears that weaken your knees, you have inner deserts where joy feels impossible. See, Isaiah, he knows that people aren't just waiting for the land to bloom, they're waiting and hoping for God himself to come and to restore, perhaps you know exactly what that feels like.

And maybe the landscape of your life has places that look scorched, dreams that didn't survive, relationships strained to breaking and fears that have quietly eroded away your confidence, maybe you're in one of those in-between seasons where God's promise is real but hasn't quite yet fully arrived, you feel it in your hands, you feel it in your knees, in your heart, and it's in these times of waiting, Isaiah encourages us to bring it to God, we bring our feeble hands, our tired service, our worn out efforts, we ask Jesus to strengthen them, we bring our unsteady knees, our anxieties, doubts and fears, we ask Jesus to hold us steady, we bring fearful hearts, the places carrying sorrow and disappointment and we ask Jesus to fill us again with his courage and joy, we can bring our feeble hands, our unsteady knees and fearful hearts to Jesus. And Isaiah goes on to tell the people, following this he says, the eyes of the blind will be opened, the lame will leap like deer, the desert will burst into bloom. And this is Isaiah's vision of what happens when God shows up and centuries later, well, God does show up in Jesus as he steps into the world, God became flesh and Isaiah's poetry, his vision begins to take on flesh, the blind actually do see, the lame actually leap, burdens lift from hearts that have carried fear for far too long and wherever Jesus goes, joy breaks through like those green shoots that rise from the ash.

We heard in Matthew's gospel in that reading from Matthew that when John the Baptist, exhausted, in prison, uncertain, he sends out a messenger to Jesus, he says, are you the one? Are you the one? And Jesus answers by quoting Isaiah. The blind see, the lame walk, good news is preached to the poor. In other words, John, the desert is blooming, it's beginning to bloom.

Isaiah's promise is happening through me. And so when Jesus heals, the wilderness rejoices. When Jesus forgives, dry ground springs to life.

When Jesus restores the broken or comforts the weary, joy erupts in the most unlikely places. Maybe you had a story like that in your life. And yet, even knowing Jesus, trusting in Jesus, we know and we recognise this world still carries its burn marks.

There are still places torn apart by war, still families fractured, still hearts weighed down by anxiety, still graves that are dug way too early, still dry patches in our own lives where joy just feels so far away. And that's that tension that we live with as Advent people, the already and the not yet. Jesus is coming and his joy is real, it's present, it's breaking into our lives and yet we still wait.

We stand between that green shoot and the full garden. And so we pray in the season of Advent, and not just Advent, all time, come Lord Jesus, fill us with your joy, strengthen our hands, steady our knees, give us courage to our fearful hearts. Because the joy God promises is not shallow happiness that disappears when circumstances change, it's not fragile or easily shaken, it's joy that's rooted in God's coming, God's faithfulness, God's presence.

And the joy Isaiah describes is the joy of a people being led home, people walking a holy way where no threat can follow them, a people who sing as they walk because they know where they're going. At the end of that reading we heard from Isaiah it says, gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away. That's the promise.

Not that we won't sigh now, not that sorrow won't visit, but that one day joy will outrun them both. Joy will chase down every tear, joy will take us home. And when Jesus returns he will not only bring joy, he will complete joy.

Every desert will bloom, every wounded place will be healed. A joy no fire can burn away, a joy no fear can silence, a joy no wilderness can swallow, a joy that one day will flood the entire earth when he comes again. On that day Isaiah's vision will burst into full bloom.

No more weak hands, no more trembling knees, no more fearful hearts, no more desolate places, just joy, pure, unbroken, everlasting joy.

So we pray, come Lord Jesus, fill us with your joy and may the peace of God which passes our understanding, may it guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

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