

## Home Group Reading for December 17-23, 2023

There were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:8-12

### Excerpts

"What was so overwhelming was that these are two people [Dalai Lama & Desmond Tutu] who have seen some of the worst suffering that has happened on the planet and yet when you are with them what you don't pick up is the heaviness and the weight of how broken the world is. What you pick up from them.... is joy. Like an explosive well that has just been tapped.... Like an overflowing, spilling sort of nuclear joy that just sort of rolls off them effortlessly."

"The joy of God has gone through the poverty of the manger and the agony of the cross; that is why it is invincible, irrefutable. It does not deny the anguish, when it is there, but finds God in the midst of it." Dietrich Bonhoeffer

3 joy truths...

- I. Joy does not come to us through avoidance or denial
- II. Joy begins in the acknowledgement of the pain, the fear, the darkness
- III. Joy becomes a choice to make within the pain, the fear, the darkness

### Reflection Questions

1. How have you experienced unexpected joy in the midst of struggle and difficulty in your life?
2. Have you felt yourself slipping into the extremes of ignoring the suffering/pain of the world or equally wallowing in despair?
3. Have there been circumstances in your life that have caused you to turn away from pain to preserve
4. How do you rationalize unexpected joy taking place in the midst of suffering?
5. As a group, watch the documentary – Mission: Joy and then see what insights it offers for you this Christmas! You can find it on CBC Gem or Netflix