[Advent E3 Transcript]

[The Hebrew Words for Joy (0:00—13:04)]

Jon: Hey, Tim.

Tim: Hello, Jon. Hi.

Jon: We are working through the Advent words.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: I've really been enjoying going through these words. I'm learning a lot. It's been really fun. So we went through "hope," and then we looked at "peace." Those are the first two.

Tim: The first two. And then this third conversation is about the word "joy."

Jon: "Joy." Yeah. Let's talk about joy.

Tim: Let's talk about joy. First of all, I just want to acknowledge that joy is an English word that I use pretty much only when I am talking to the couple of people I know in my life named Joy. [Both laugh] I know two Joys.

Jon: Yeah. It's a good name.

Tim: Uh-huh. I don't use the word joy. If I am gonna say that idea, describing myself, I would just say, "I'm happy."

Jon: Yeah. Okay, but if you're, like, having a day where you feel especially happy, exuberantly happy—

Tim: You want to ramp it up.

Jon: —what would you say about that day? Or about yourself, the inner feelings.

Tim: Hmm. I would say I just felt so good. I just felt happy. I felt grateful. I wouldn't use the word joy. I wouldn't say, "I'm just so full of joy."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That sounds religious to me. Especially the verb “rejoice.” To me, that’s full-on Bible speak.

Jon: I’ve never told someone to rejoice.

[Both laugh]

Tim: Yeah, totally. We would use the word “celebrate.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like, “Here, it’s my birthday, I’m having a birthday party. Come rejoice with me.” [Both laugh] You’d never say that. But you would say, “Come celebrate with me.” Yeah, I’m going to celebrate the fact that I’m this many years old.

Jon: Come on.

Tim: Come on. Let’s have a party. “Party,” “celebrate,” “happy,” these are our normal words. In the Hebrew Bible, it’s actually like half a dozen words to describe what we’re gonna find out—four that get used the most, and then there’s some other kind of rare—

Jon: Four main Hebrew words that get translated “joy.”

Tim: Wholly different roots, yes. And each one of them gets translated—in fact, I’m just gonna show you a bunch of examples about how they’re used in all these different passages, and it’s hard to tell them apart. So I—here’s the four words, and there won’t be a quiz. But there are little nuances of difference here. So the first one is from the root *sameakh*, and then there’s a noun, *simkhah*. And it’s probably the most general word. It’s the most common one. It’s used over a hundred times, like, just “to be happy” or “to express your happiness.” So you can make it a causative verb, you can make someone happy. Or you can just be in the state of *sameakh*. And then, if you want to say it as a noun, you would say *simkhah*. *Simkhah* was the name of the woman that I rented our apartment from—

Jon: In Jerusalem?

Tim: —the year I went to school in Jerusalem. *Simkhah*.

Jon: Her name just means “happiness.”

Tim: Yeah, “joy.” Yeah. Happy.

Jon: Happy.

Tim: Yeah, totally. Yeah. It’s the Hebrew equivalent of someone naming their daughter Joy. Okay, so that’s that one. Then there’s *gil*.

Jon: *Gil*.

Tim: And if you turn it into a noun, there's *gilah*. And as we're gonna see, it's usually just translated also "rejoice" or "joy." *Sameakh* is often used to describe someone's feeling or their experience.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: We might say emotion. *Gil* is like a bit more of an outward demonstration of it.

Jon: Okay. It's more about the action of it.

Tim: Yeah, totally. So it might be like, you know, the—I don't know, jazz hands [both laugh] kind of thing, like— You're demonstrating—

Jon: Is that how you demonstrate your joy?

[Both laughing]

Tim: No, never.

Jon: Never.

Tim: Ah, that's a good point. How do you show that you're happy?

Jon: I think there's more movement in your body.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Carefreeness, maybe.

Tim: Maybe in how you talk, what you talk, the tone of your voice.

Jon: Yeah. Might get kind of loud and kind of excitable.

Tim: There you go. It seems to be—we'll look at examples, but that seems to be the vibe of *gil*. There's a specific word to just describe expressing your joy by being loud.

Jon: Oh.

Tim: That's *ranen*.

Jon: *Ranen*.

Tim: *Ranen* is the verb, and then *renanah* or *rinnah*, which just means "shout of joy."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Joyful shout.

Jon: Cheering.

Tim: Cheering. Yeah. Like, yay!

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Hooray! [Jon laughs] What's hooray? What is that?

Jon: [laughing] Hooray. Hip hip.

Tim: "Hoo-ray." Like—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But that's a word. Hooray. So that's *ranen*. So we've got the feeling of joy, a visible demonstration of joy, and then a shout of joy. And then there's even a fourth word that's used, like, about twenty times in the Hebrew Bible, *sus* or *sason*. And I don't—we'll look at examples. It seems to just mean—I can't pin *sason* down. In the dictionaries, they just say, like, "joy" or "rejoice."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So there's four words that are used a lot in the Hebrew Bible, and if you look them up in the dictionary, all of them will just say, "joy, rejoice." And then the one word, *ranen*, will be like "shout for joy." "A shout of joy."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So there you go. That's pretty rich vocabulary.

Jon: Yeah. Four words to talk about being joyful.

Tim: Yeah. So let's look at examples. Let's start at the classic, classic moment of communal joy, which is a wedding. The joy of a wedding. Jeremiah, after the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem was just so tragic and horrific, he trusts that God's gonna bring about a restoration of Jerusalem. And when he wants to describe that restoration, he says, "Once again, there will be heard in this place," that is Jerusalem, "Jerusalem, of which you are now saying, 'Oh, it's just a waste. There's no people, not even animals around. The towns of Judah, the streets of Jerusalem are desolate without people. But again, there will be heard in this place the voice of *sason* and the voice of *simkhah*." There's our two words. "The voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: "The voices of those who say, 'Praise Yahweh of hosts, for Yahweh's good, his loyal love is forever.' The voices of those who are bringing their thank-you offerings to the house of Yahweh. I'll restore the fortunes of the land as in the beginning." The thank-you offerings in the temple.

Jon: Yeah. You don't think of the temple sacrifice moments of being joyful like a wedding.

Tim: Hmm.

Jon: You think of those being very somber experiences.

Tim: Oh, okay. Well, I hope to change that impression. We're gonna look at a lot more examples.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: No, it—it was a party time.

Jon: Really?

Tim: Because, especially a thank-you offering, which was the majority of offerings the Israelites brought, you take home a bunch of what you offered. Some of what you offer is burnt up or given to the priests, but you get back most of it, and then you have a huge feast.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Big party.

Jon: It's party time.

Tim: Yeah. Offering a sacrifice was party time for the majority of the offerings. So praising Yahweh in the temple, we think of that as, like, worship.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And then there's the sound of people bringing their thank-you offerings to God. And there's the sound of a wedding. And all three of those are set on analogy to each other. Isn't that cool? And it's called *sason* and *simkhah*. So—let's let the definitions build.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Ah. Here's a rad little proverb about the joy that parents experience in their children. Sometimes. [Jon laughs] Proverbs 23:22. It's from a father to a son. "Listen to your father—the one who gave you life, and don't despise your mother when she's old. Buy truth," like, get truth, "and don't sell it, wisdom and instruction and understanding." So it's a common motif in Proverbs. Your mom and your dad are God's gift of wisdom to you as a child, and from them you can buy truth that you should never sell.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And "the father of the righteous one," so the father of a son who goes on to do right by God and neighbor—

Jon: To live by wisdom.

Tim: Yeah. “He will surely *gil*.” Be happy, rejoice. “The one who births a wise person will be happy with him,” that is, the one who is born. That’s *sameakh*. “May your father and mother be glad.”

Jon: Oh, glad. That’s a word we haven’t used yet.

Tim: *Sameakh*—ooh, glad! That’s a good point. That’s another English word. I would just say, “I’m happy.” “I feel happy today.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “And may the one who bore you rejoice.” So it’s our two words in a cool little symmetry. You’ve got *gil*, *sameakh*, *sameakh*, and *gil* in a row here.

Jon: Okay. So *gil* is usually about action. *Sameakh* is the most general. And this is all around a kid who has learned wisdom from their parents.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: And then the parents are stoked.

Tim: They’re stoked when they launch a kid into the world who goes on to do right by other people and be really wise.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It’s a cool feeling.

Jon: It’s a cool feeling.

Tim: *Sameakh*. *Sameakh* and *gil*.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Okay. Proverbs 27:9. “Perfume and incense that bring *sameakh* to a heart, so also the sweetness of a friend from their heartfelt advice.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Isn’t that a great proverb?

Jon: Yeah. Hmm. I have gone into a room where they were burning, like, a really good incense. And it just kind of makes the room feel special.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It relaxes your body a little bit.

Tim: So that feeling that you experience is described here as *sameakh*. It’s *sameakh* to your heart. Isn’t that interesting? And then that’s set on analogy to a friend giving you

some real honest but important advice. And the bond—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You'd be like, "Whoa, you care about me and you shared that," there's a sweetness there. And those two things are set on analogy to each other.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I love that. So last one here. Just again, trying to get a sense of the vocabulary. Psalm 32 verse 10, "Many are the pains," or the troubles, "of the wicked." You know, you do wrong by God and neighbor, you bring a heap of trouble on yourself. "But for the one who trusts Yahweh, loyal love surrounds him. Be glad," *sameakh*, "in Yahweh. And *gil*," rejoice, "you righteous ones. And *ranen*," shout for joy, "all you upright of heart." So we got three words all right here.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "*Sameakh* in Yahweh." So *sameakh* is something you feel because of your trust in somebody, like the emotion.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: But then there's a call to *gil*, which might—

Jon: That's more of an action.

Tim: —fit that outward demonstration. And then *ranen* is like the ultimate outward demonstration. You just, like—

Jon: Do the exuberance of it.

Tim: Yes! Woo!

[Jon laughs]

Jon: You talked about going to a soccer game with your family for the first time recently.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah.

Jon: And just how, like, rowdy and exuberant the crowd gets.

Tim: Oh, they're so into it.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah. Portland soccer is a really big deal. It was so rowdy. People were so into it. Yeah. That's it. That's *ranen*.

Jon: *Ranen*.

Tim: So actually, I'm just noticing right here in Psalm 32, the contrast is like, basically, if you don't do right by God and neighbor, your life's likely gonna be more full of trouble than not. And probably a lot of it self-caused. But if you trust in Yahweh, um, and do right by God and neighbor, then man, Yahweh will bring some of that goodness back around your way. And when you feel that, when you have the experience of a season of life well-lived, there's a feeling of happiness in Yahweh, but then a demonstration of that, and then a full-on, just like—you kind of lose self-control for a moment. You just shout. It's all you can think to do.

Jon: Hmm.

[Musical Break (12:35—13:04)]

[Joy in Psalms, Songs, and Processions (13:04—22:34)]

Tim: Okay. Here's what's so interesting. The highest concentration of these words is found in the book of Psalms. And most consistently, it's a response to what God has done. And in lots of these little scenes, you can put together how ancient Israelites celebrate. Something awesome would happen in their lives, and if they lived in proximity to the temple, they would bring a thank-you offering to God. And as they're offering it, they would turn around and just start storytelling and thanking God, right there in the temple courts. And it's very often that these words come up. So let's look at some examples.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Psalm 42—ah, which is a lament, actually. It begins by saying, like, "Where are you, God? My soul is downcast within me." But he remembers something from the past that's really special to him. He says, "I remember, and I pour out my soul within me about the times when I would go along with the multitude. In fact, I would lead a group in procession to the house of God with a voice of *renanah*," [Editor's Note: Tim meant *rinnah*] that's rejoicing, shouting for joy. "And thanksgiving," it's about giving a thanksgiving offering. And "a crowd celebrating a festival."

Jon: Hmm. So there'd be these times of these offerings, it was so communal that there'd be crowds of people going.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: And you would even have someone kind of leading that group. Like, “We’re doing it—we’re going to the temple. We’re doing the thing.”

Tim: And you’re singing on the way.

Jon: It’s party time. Singing on the way.

Tim: You’re shouting.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah. So we don’t know if this is describing Passover or Pentecost or Tabernacles, but think of when Jesus comes into the city on Palm Sunday in the Gospels, and there’s all that crew. Now they’re celebrating him, right, as the hoped-for Messiah. But you get the idea of a group of people that’s traveled to the city, and they’re singing songs as they go through the gates on their way up to the temple.

Jon: Yeah, that’s cool.

Tim: By Jesus’ time, that’s already an ancient tradition that this guy’s remembering right here in Psalm 42. “There were times when I got to do this.” And it seems like the lament poem is like, those times are no more, and I long for them.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But he has a sweet memory.

Jon: I have thought before how cool it would be to have lived in a setting where, even if it was just once a year, it’s you and your crew and your friends. And we’re backpacking. We got all our food, we got our tents, we got people along the way that are gonna host us. But like, we’re gonna caravan—

Tim: Oh, I see, I see.

Jon: —to Jerusalem, and then we’re gonna party. It would be hard, but the memories—

Tim: Oh, think of that.

Jon: And then when you get there, and you’re celebrating—

Tim: Yeah, yeah, it would shape you in a big way.

Jon: It would shape you.

Tim: It would be the annual highlight.

Jon: It would be the favorite thing that you’d do all year.

Tim: Yeah. This is Passover.

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

Tim: This is Passover in ancient Israel.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah, man. It's really remarkable. Like, we don't actually have very many, if at all, equivalents to this. Yeah. Yes. Okay. So here's just two other examples. Isaiah chapter 30 remembers a moment like this, and he—he remembers the party going into the nighttime. He says it'll be like "a song in the night, you know, like when the holy festivals are kept," so the Passover, Pentecost, and "gladness of heart," there's *simkhah*, like somebody going along with the flute, going up to the mountain of Yahweh.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So now we've got flute leaders going.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: I mean, imagine the scene. Psalm 107. Here's a group of people that called out to God for help. God saved them. He sent his word and healed them. He delivered them from pits. [Tim laughs]

Jon: Why are you laughing?

Tim: It's just the Bible. [Jon laughs]

Jon: Well pits, like, pits come up in the Bible a lot.

Tim: They do.

Jon: Was it a problem back then?

Tim: Well, I— [laughs]

Jon: Was there a lot of pits?

Tim: They're also—yes, but also I think it's, it becomes a symbol of, like, a trap on the road.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The point is, it's in a very general kind of symbolic sense. They were in trouble. Yahweh rescued them. What are they gonna do? They're gonna go give thanks to Yahweh, and they are gonna tell of his wonderful deeds for the children of Adam. They're going to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of his works with *renanah*, shouts of joy. [Editor's Note: Tim meant *rinnah*] So you get the vibe.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: This was a big part of Israelite life. You had a central city with the temple and annual pilgrimages and then personal pilgrimages. Like, if you have the annual thing going with a group, then when you have major milestone events in your life, it would just occur to you, like, “I’m just gonna do my own pilgrimage and go down there this weekend. And who wants to come with me?” “Well, I had this great crop of wheat this year after two years of, like, drought, and I just—let’s party, man. Let’s go to Jerusalem. I’m gonna offer a sacrifice, and then we’ll eat it, and it’ll be a great night.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “Who’s gonna bring the flute?”

[Laughter]

Tim: Like, that’s the vibe.

Jon: That’s awesome.

Tim: Isn’t that a rad way to live?

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: Okay, here’s what’s cool. Think of a culture steeped in this way of life. And then when the biblical authors retold stories from early in Israel’s history, you can see certain stories modeled on this pattern.

Jon: Hold on. Say the pattern one more time. The pattern is?

Tim: Hmm. Yahweh does something for you.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Something rad in your life happens. It’s a good thing. And you go to the temple, give a thank-you offering, and then you break out in song and shout, and you tell the story of what God did for you. That’s just the lived experience on a communal level, with the annual pilgrimages, and then on an individual level. So the first story that’s modeled on this pattern is actually the Exodus story. It’s really cool. So there’s the night of Passover, and the Israelites leave Egypt, and then they pass through the waters of the sea. Right? The perishing of Pharaoh’s army. And then the narrative just stops. And we’re told in Exodus 15, “Then Moses and the Israelites just broke out in song.” And they sing what’s called the Song of the Sea. And it begins, “I’m gonna sing to the Lord, for he is highly exalted. Horse and driver, he’s hurled into the sea. The Lord’s my strength, my defense, my salvation. He’s my God, I’ll praise him. My Father’s God, I’ll exalt him.” So there’s no rejoicing vocabulary here, but lots of singing and praising.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: But then once the poem ends, what you're told is Miriam—this is in Exodus 15:20—Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, but also—

Jon: Moses's sister.

Tim: —Moses's sister. She got a tambourine, or a little timbrel, and she got a whole group of women to follow her. They also had little tambourines, and they're dancing. And then Miriam led them in singing. And then it's the same, verbatim, from the opening lines of the song that Moses and the Israelites sang. "I'll sing to the Lord. He's highly exalted. Horse and rider he's hurled into the sea." So it's got this, like, back and forth. There's, like, the guys sing a part, and then the ladies sing a part. It's like a full-on worship procession. And this heart of the song is about how you're gonna bring us into the land you promised and take us to your holy mountain where we'll worship you.

Jon: Yeah, they're still hoping for something more.

Tim: Yeah. The song itself is, like, in anticipation of us going to some holy space to meet you, and we'll sing the song ahead of time.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: That's the twist. The song is anticipating the going to God's holy space. We're gonna sing the song while we're still on the way—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —to the holy mountain of God.

Jon: You'll still go through the wilderness—

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: —and get to the mountain.

Tim: Mhm. But God has done a cool thing already, and we anticipate he will continue to, and so we'll sing on the way. So it's almost like a preemptive joy.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Or an anticipatory joy. Joy on the way.

Jon: Yeah. And this brings us to the Advent season then, which is about anticipation.

Tim: Exactly. Totally.

Jon: Why would the word joy be used when we're anticipating something? Usually you think of angst when you're anticipating something that you want to come.

Tim: Yeah, totally. So this, what's so interesting is that anticipatory joy. It's like celebrating ahead of time. And that's kind of what the Song of the Sea does. God's already done something, but—

Jon: Yeah, it's a little both.

Tim: —he's gonna do something bigger, and we trust that he'll do that bigger thing based on what he's already done. And we'll sing in the moment to just celebrate the whole story as if it's already happened.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So it's just this very portrait of joy that you find in the joy vocabulary of the New Testament. And it just saturates the New Testament.

[Musical Break (22:11—22:34)]

[New Testament Joy in Jesus and the Spirit (22:34—34:34)]

Tim: So there's two main words in the Greek New Testament for "joy." And one is *khairo*, and the other is *agalliao*. And the *khairo* root is used, like, 120 times in the New Testament. Then the *agalliao* root is used just a little over a dozen times. So the *khairo* root is the main one.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And again, it's hard to tell them apart. Rejoice, be happy. But there's only two words instead of four in the Hebrew Bible. The gospel account that uses joy vocabulary the most of the four Gospels is Luke. People are just stoked in Luke. [Jon laughs] There's just happiness. And these are famous passages. Here—when the angel comes to John the Baptist's dad to say, like, "Hey, your wife's going to be pregnant, give birth to a son named John." He says, "You're gonna experience joy," *khara*, from the *khairo* root, "and celebration," it's from the *agalliao* root. "And many other people are going to *khairo* at his birth." So you're gonna have joy, and you're gonna celebrate.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And other people will celebrate at this kid. When Mary sings her famous song, when she finds out that she's gonna give birth to the Messiah, the Son of God, the first thing she says is, "My soul exalts in the Lord, and my spirit *agalliao*-s," rejoices, "in God

my Savior.” And these songs, especially her song, it sounds like it just came right out of Isaiah and the psalms. Um, the famous moment when the angels come to the shepherds, you know, to announce the birth of Jesus.

Jon: Don’t be afraid.

Tim: “I bring you good tidings of great joy,” you know? So this is the vibe in Luke. It’s just joy everywhere.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: When Jesus sends out seventy-two of his followers to go do what he’s been doing, announcing the good news of the Kingdom, when they come back and they’re like, “Whoa, we got to heal some people and, like, drive away evil forces,” we’re told that they “return with joy.” And then we’re told that Jesus himself “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit.” He was, like, so full of the presence of God that he has this moment of rejoicing. What’s cool about this is that, think of how, as I was showing you in the psalms, moments of joy are marked moments of either celebrating God’s presence and activity in your life or actually straight up going to the temple. There’s this connection of joy in God’s presence.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And that’s what we’re seeing here. God’s acting in this way. He’s gonna send the forerunner, John the Baptist. Mary celebrating God creating a body for the Messiah in her womb. And now here’s Jesus rejoicing in the Spirit, which is like the presence of the Father with him.

Jon: Hmm. Lots of joy.

Tim: Lots of joy. Luke uses the vocabulary of sadness turning to joy in the resurrection stories.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: When Jesus meets the two walking on the road to Emmaus, and they’re talking about how their friend and leader got killed, and they’re really sad about it, in Luke 24:17, he asks, “What are you guys talking about as you walk along?” Because they don’t know it’s Jesus. And Luke says, “And they stood still, looking very sad.” And then they say, “Well, we’d had this friend and leader, and then he got killed and ...” So they’re sad. And then after he has a meal with them and a Bible study and shows them his hands and his feet, what we hear is that those two, along with a group—this is in Luke 24:41—“they were still not fully believing what was going on because of joy. And they were just stunned.”

Jon: Hmm. They were in disbelief because of joy.

Tim: Yeah. Isn't that an interesting line? "They were disbelieving still because of joy, and they were just marveling," meaning they were so shocked—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: —that Jesus is right there. So, that's an interesting line. It goes from sadness to joy.

Jon: Yeah. So sudden. Where your mind hasn't embraced it. You're like, "Is this for real? Can I really—ooh—trust this is actually happening? This is really good."

Tim: Yeah. Hmm. So in context, the moment Jesus is just all of a sudden in the middle of the room, it says they were startled and afraid because they thought they were seeing a ghost.

Jon: Right.

Tim: And then he says, "Why are you guys freaked out? Why are you doubting? Here I am. It's me." And then when they're still disbelieving because of joy, he says, "Do you guys have anything to eat?" [Jon laughs] And then he sits and eats with them.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So there's something about the shock.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Luke has a rich vocabulary of joy to talk about the arrival of Jesus Messiah, the experience of Jesus Messiah himself, and then the transition from sorrow to joy on Easter weekend. As you continue on in Luke's work in the book of Acts, joy vocabulary continues. And what you find especially is the language of joy in moments of terrible, terrible, tragic events. And the followers of Jesus choose joy.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So here's just a couple examples. This is in Acts chapter 5, when Peter and company were teaching about Jesus in the temple and they get arrested. They get put in prison, but then the Sanhedrin aren't sure what to do with these guys. So instead, they just have their backs whipped, and humiliated, and then they command them, like, stop talking about Jesus. And they let them go free.

Jon: Yeah. It's a bad day.

Tim: It's a bad day! Like, dude. Think if that—you get arrested.

Jon: Public humiliation.

Tim: Publicly humiliated. Literally—

Jon: And beat.

Tim: And beaten. Like, your back's bloody. You're gonna have scars for that the rest of your life.

Jon: Eww.

Tim: You walk out. They let you go.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You're walking out the door. This is Acts 5 verse 41. "They," this is Peter and company, "went out from the presence of the Sanhedrin rejoicing because they had been considered worthy to be dishonored for the sake of the name," that is, the name of Jesus. And "every day in the temple courts, house to house, they did not stop teaching and announcing the good news that Jesus was the Messiah." And this is a pattern that continues. There's this moment similar to that in Acts chapter 13, where Paul and Barnabas have gone to a Jewish synagogue in the city called Pisidian Antioch. And a bunch of the Jewish community leaders are not stoked. And so they get a mob together to get Paul and Barnabas kicked out of their city. And so they, like, beat them and, like, reject them. And so Paul and Barnabas "shake the dust off their feet."

Jon: Which is a turn of phrase?

Tim: Mhm. Like, we're leaving you guys behind. Even the dust of your town that's on the bottom of our feet, we shake it off. We're moving on. And they went on to the next city. "And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit."

Jon: Hmm. Filled with joy and filled with—

Tim: Isn't that interesting?

Jon: —the Spirit of God.

Tim: Yeah. Yeah. So this theme of joy, you can trace it right on through the letters. Paul, Peter will talk about rejoicing, being glad, especially when something terrible happens to you because you follow Jesus.

Jon: Yeah. I mean, that's the model in Scripture from the Song of the Sea even. We got a taste of what God can do. And now we're going to not only rejoice in that, we're gonna rejoice in, like, how the story's gonna end. And then you get into these situations where you're dealing with suffering, like, you're in the wilderness, and you can still rejoice.

Tim: Yes. Yeah, so I think that's the twist is from that pattern we saw in the psalms, you go celebrate with joy when God has done the thing.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: The exodus provides a tweak on that where God has done part of the thing, a foundational part of the thing, like, the climax was Passover. But then there's the whole journey on into the promised land that God has yet to do, but we are going to sing as if we're at the end of the story. That's what the Song of the Sea represents. And then here in the New Testament, that's the vibe. Like, Messiah's come. On Passover weekend, he died and was raised, and the promised land, new creation is ahead. We're going to sing and rejoice in the present as if the story has already reached its completion. And that's fully the picture of this rejoicing in suffering that then you see. And that's the portrait of joy called up for followers of Jesus every year if you celebrate Advent. It's that picture of joy.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And joy is often connected with the presence of the Spirit in the New Testament. Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit. The disciples at Pisidian Antioch are filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. Paul will say in Romans, the Kingdom of God isn't, you know, eating or drinking or celebrating on certain days that different groups dispute which day is, like, the sacred day. He says it's "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

[Tim laughs]

Jon: What—what verse is that?

Tim: Yeah, it's in Romans 14. The Kingdom of God is not about eating or drinking, but it's about doing right by God and neighbor. It's about peace. And then it's about joy in the Holy Spirit. That's the Kingdom of God right there. Which, you can celebrate by eating and drinking, but eating and drinking was, like, being disputed—on what days should you celebrate, you know, certain holy days. And different Christians had different opinions. And he's like, remember—

[Jon laughs]

Jon: Remember the point.

Tim: Remember the point. Doing right by God and neighbor, bringing about the *shalom* fulfillment and then anticipating and celebrating as if the new creation has already got started.

Jon: And to do that, you're doing that in the Holy Spirit.

Tim: In the Spirit.

Jon: The Spirit of God.

Tim: Mhm. Yeah, yeah. Joy, preemptive joy.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Yeah, there you go.

Jon: And it's also joy for what God has done.

Tim: Mhm. From our vantage point, not only has the Messiah been born, he lived and died and was raised, and the Spirit's been given to his people. So that, for us, is like our exodus event. And now we are waiting for the full realization of new creation. And our own Songs of the Sea, so to speak, are our way of going out with joy, like in the language of Psalm 105.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Being brought out with shouts of joy. And so, you know, you end up in prison, like Paul or Peter, or you just end up—We're outside Eden, and our bodies are crumbling, and it's hard to get along with each other. [laughs] Families are all complicated and dysfunctional. There's lots to grieve there. But that grief also needs to be balanced by, I guess, a bigger perspective. And that's Christian joy. Choosing to not let my present circumstances tell the whole story about what I believe is true about my life or the world. And when I have that bigger story, then it's a choice of joy.