

**Isaiah 35:1-10**

### Come, Jesus, and fill us with joy

For many this is a particularly joyful time of year. This Sunday is Gaudete or rejoicing Sunday. Our Old Testament reading offers us a joyous vision of renewal while the Gospel centres on joy being given in a place of questioning or despair. As we explore these, we think about how we may be bearers as well as receivers of the Lord's joy.

Read this week's passage:



The words of Isaiah 35 and the words of Jesus to John's disciples were words spoken to people in despair. Words of hope, words of joy. Makes some cards, to give or send to people who may be feeling down even in the run up to Christmas. Include some simple but sincere words of hope and blessing.

### Discuss

When you are eating or drinking this week (literally filling up!), discuss things which have brought you joy as a reminder that, in the same way we are filled with food and drink that we need, God also fills us with joy.

Find more free Roots resources to reflect on this week's theme:



### Living Scripture

*'And the ransomed of the Lord shall return... they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'* Isaiah 35:10

Someone once said that Christmas could only begin when they heard Chris Rea's *Driving Home for Christmas* being played. A sense of homecoming when you have been away can be very powerful. Isaiah 35 was addressed to God's people in exile – longing for home. It is a prophecy of hope and joy. In Advent, we look forward to the coming of Jesus – the one who fills us with real joy. The imagery of Isaiah 35 and the season of Advent invite us to imagine a world remade, full of the glory and majesty of God, when Jesus comes again. A place where we finally feel at home, full of peace and joy.

As you think about the idea of home, it may surface different emotions: comfort, sadness, loss, longing, hope. We look towards a time and place when all will be healed, restored and reconciled. We look to our home in God with joy. And in Advent, we remember God made his home with us, as Jesus came to be born as a baby. Emmanuel – God with us.

How can you make a home for Jesus in your life this Advent?

### First impressions

- What things bring you joy?
- Is your community a desert or a lush landscape where faith can grow?
- What opportunities are there to help others know about God's 'Holy Way'?



### Pray

Come, Lord Jesus, this Advent season,  
and fill us afresh with your joy.  
Take away our sorrow and sighing  
and help us to bring joy to others, we pray.  
Amen.



Have a clear-out by looking at items/holding them and deciding which 'spark joy'. For those which don't, give them away/donate to charity/recycle, so that they can be put to good use. Having less can sometimes bring you joy!

### WATCH

Watch the film *Inside Out* as a reminder of joy living alongside all the other emotions in you. Talk together with the people you live with about what makes you feel joyful, and whether you can be joyful when sad things are also happening too.