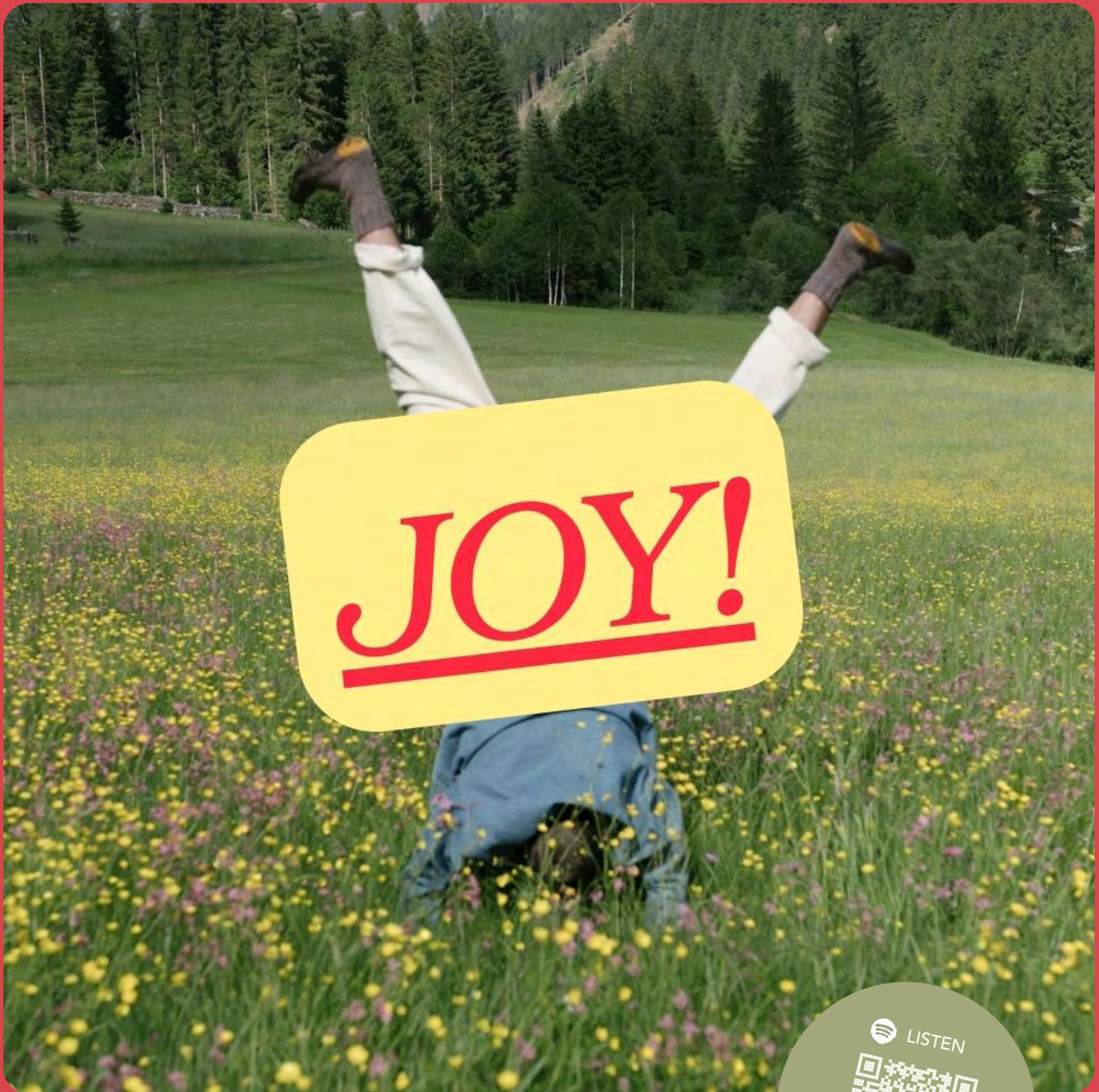


Wednesday, April 16, 2025



*Day 37*

*“But humans are born  
for trouble as surely as  
sparks fly upward.”*

—JOB 5:7 (CSB)

## Reflect

“Choose joy,” we’re told, and when I talk about this, that’s when I can feel my most terrifying smile start to form on my lips—the smile that says that this kind of advice is a misguided form of the commodification of one of the most amazing things that can happen to us. But that’s the thing, because it happens...to us. We don’t get to will our way into all the positive feelings of this world. Joy comes to us, to be sure, and we drink it in because it is such a gift in the midst of lives that are truly hard. And that’s just true.

This is Holy Week, where we feel the tilt of the earth shift toward a spiritual night. Jesus is preparing for his great sacrifice. And if you are in the midst of suffering, this is the time to remember that God is with you in *this*. We feel the deep unfairness that life is hard. In fact, terrible sometimes. Maybe more than sometimes. These are things we hide from our kids. This is the truth we rise above for their sakes, in our actions that speak love and make good things happen even in the face of really hard things. And sometimes we even get to do that in a way powered by that other truest thing—joy, that does come. This week as we prepare for the deep night, we will see everything: pain, but even joy. Look for it. Wait for it. We can’t manufacture it, but we can trust it when it comes.

# *Respond*

What would it look like to take a responsibility break? (Even if that's a 10 minute walk or just sitting down and looking out the window).



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# *Blessing for when good news is hard to find*

*Bless you, witnessing the crumbling world—  
the disasters too fresh to mend,  
the losses that will not be restored,  
the cracks that will never be filled.*

*Blessed are we, searching for hope:  
for peace breaking through like dawn,  
for the hungry to be fed,  
for pain to be relieved.*

*Blessed are we, who dare to dream:  
parents might not fear for their children,  
leaders might guard their people,  
someday relief will come—  
a world where death is swallowed whole  
and tears dry forever.*

*Here, in this unfinishable life,  
we bring our burdens (so heavy)  
to hands strong enough to carry them.*

*Blessed are you,  
walking the path of courage:  
finding improbable ways to love,  
offering creative acts of mercy,  
and practicing irreverent defiance of despair.*

*Blessed are you, who create  
beauty in this world.  
May you carry this quiet revolution into  
a world aching for signs of hope.*

*Blessed are we, trusting that somehow,  
even now, today could be a sign  
of good things to come.<sup>43</sup>*

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43 Kate Bowler. "For When Good News is Hard to Find" in *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day: Daily Meditations for the Ups, Downs, and In-Betweens*. (New York: Convergent Books, 2024). 169.