

A night sky with a bright starburst in the upper center, casting a glow over a landscape of rolling hills and a village of small, square buildings. The sky is dark blue with some clouds, and the starburst has a circular lens flare effect.

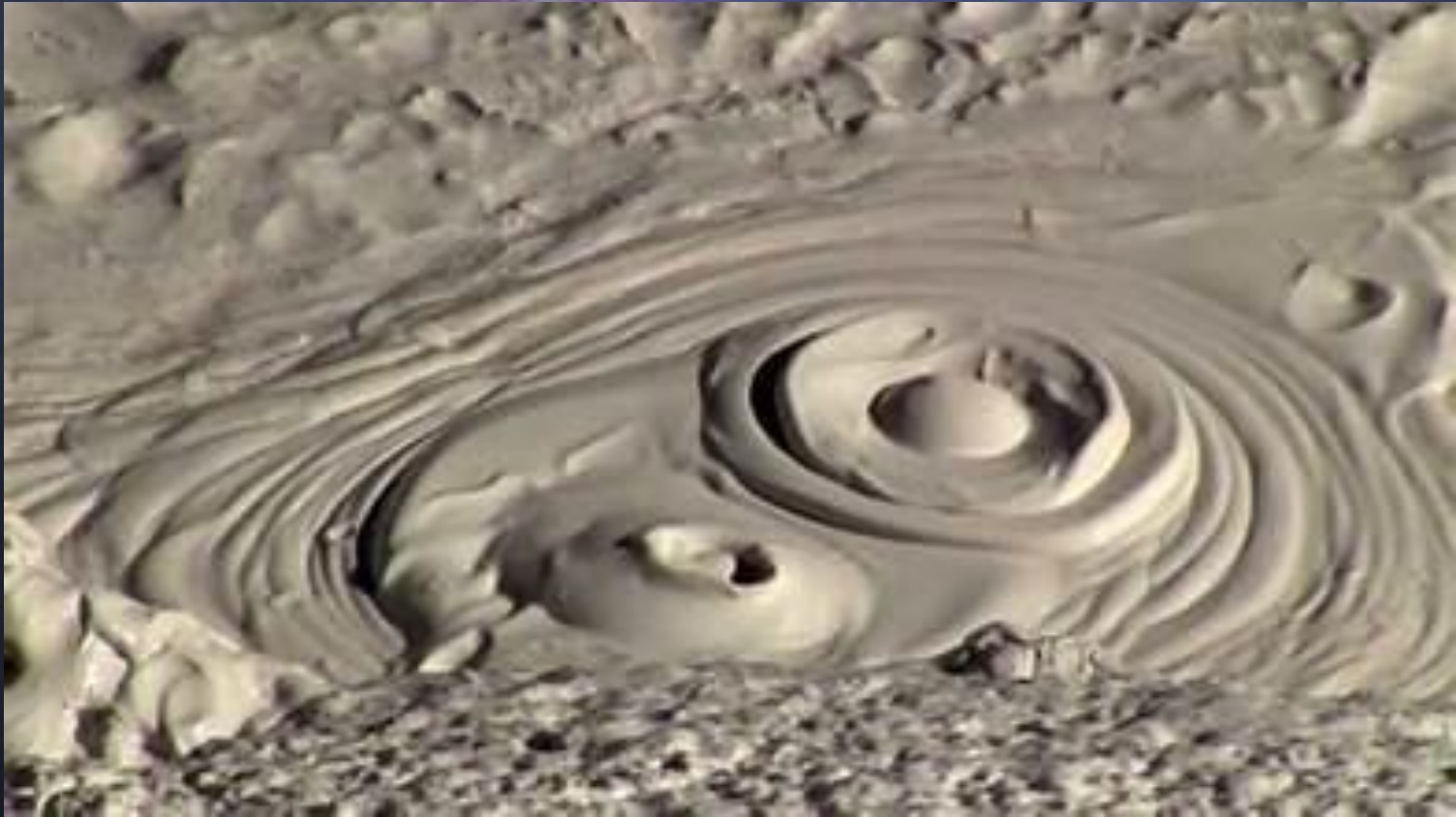
Rediscover Joy

Matthew 2, Luke 1

Old Faithful



Mud Pots



Grand Prismatic Spring



Fly Geyser



Zechariah and Elizabeth

- Christmas joy is born out of pressure, disappointment, and grief.
- Zechariah and Elizabeth are described as righteous, blameless, and faithful.
- Zechariah and Elizabeth have never been able to have children.
- Elizabeth is going to have a powerful prophetic son who will prepare the way for the coming Messiah.
- Doubt filled Zechariah but for Elizabeth, it was joy.

Joy And Happiness Are Allowed

- We need to rediscover that joy and happiness are allowed in life.
- The Bible does not make any distinction between joy and happiness.
- Our longing for happiness and joy is a natural desire that God has placed within us as a reflection of His own joyful nature.
- Against the past backdrop of discouragement, disgrace, grief, and shame, joy comes bursting through.
- Mary must have known that her challenges and disgrace were about to begin.
- When fear and anxiety about the future could have crippled Mary, she found someone with whom to share her news.

Joy Shared Makes Joy Stronger

- We need to rediscover that joy shared makes joy stronger.
- Mary did not have to explain herself to Elizabeth.
- Elizabeth's developing baby knew Mary was pregnant and leaped within her.
- Elizabeth confirmed that the baby growing inside Mary's womb was from the Holy Spirit.
- For Elizabeth, the inability to have children would have been a lifelong source of pain, sorrow, and shame.
- Our true source of happiness, joy, and fulfillment comes from Christ.
- The joy of the Lord can be felt no matter what we are facing.

Joy Is A Choice

- We need to rediscover that joy is a choice.
- In the magi and King Herod, we see two different responses to the news of Jesus birth.
 - The wise men saw the star and rejoiced with exceedingly great joy.
 - King Herod chose to be threatened by the news of a new King of the Jews.
- Rejoice is the verb form of joy meaning to return to joy.
- Rejoicing is our process of refueling our tank, restoring our strength, and renewing our spirit.
- We can celebrate in this season as we remember and turn to Jesus, Who came to be with us and to give us joy.

Conclusion

- Joy is meant to be shared.
- If we are going to follow in the steps of the Master, it means meeting the needs of the hurting, the hungry, the fearful, and the anxious.

