

“Joy”

Pastor Grant Williams May 6, 2015
Fruit of the Spirit Week #7

As we talk about Joy (as a element or part of the fruit of the spirit) we are talking not so much about jumping up and down for joy like when you win the lottery, though it might be like that I suppose. Sometimes I think people who are always bouncing around, seeming over the top happy may actually be covering up something that is not true joy.

You know who I'm talking about, that person who comes in and everything is the best and they just can't believe how great their day is - liar.

My marriage is the best and she makes me so happy while just the other day - marriage counseling is coming up!

The direct translation of joy is “cheerful calm delight”. But this joy is usually more like a contentment, or a state of intense gratitude, a constant inner smile regardless of what is going on around you, but it's also noticeable by others. Sometimes we rejoice in an energetic way, other times we rejoice in a calmer way.

Let's look at two things about this joy. First we see:

I. The Motivation for Joy

A. The Salvation of Our Souls

Every single human being ever born since Adam and Eve is destined for death and eternal separation from God. Let's let that sink in for minute. Until you claim Christ as Savior and Lord, believe in Him and entrust your life to Him, you are a dead man walking.

Now it's easy to say, "well I better make the most of life while I have it then", and that is true, but the methods you choose have eternal consequences. Life is short but our souls are eternal and will reside somewhere after the death of this body. The Bible says, (Gods Words) there are two choices, heaven or hell. Those people who choose to get every drop out of life, by doing whatever they desire, and fail to accept Jesus' salvation might have a great time in this millisecond of eternity life, but forever isn't going to be very pleasant.

So for the believing Christian the greatest thing we have, and will ever have to rejoice in, is the salvation our souls. Jesus is promising eternal communion with God in the Kingdom of Heaven after we die. How can we not rejoice in that when we think of the alternative?

Jesus is talking to the 72 disciples that went out and performed miracles,

Luke 10:1-24 (Amplified Bible)

1 NOW AFTER this the Lord chose and appointed seventy others and sent them out ahead of Him, two by two, into every town and place where He Himself was about to come (visit).

2 And He said to them, The harvest indeed is abundant [there is much ripe grain], but the farmhands are few. Pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.

3 Go your way; behold, I send you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.

4 Carry no purse, no provisions bag, no [change of] sandals; refrain from [retarding your journey by] saluting and wishing anyone well along the way.

5 Whatever house you enter, first say, Peace be to this household! [Freedom from all the distresses that result from sin be with this family].

6 And if anyone [worthy] of peace and blessedness is there, the peace and blessedness you wish shall come upon him; but if not, it shall come back to you.

7 And stay on in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not keep moving from house to house.

8 Whenever you go into a town and they receive and accept and welcome you, eat what is set before you;

9 And heal the sick in it and say to them, The kingdom of God has come close to you.

10 But whenever you go into a town and they do not receive and accept and welcome you, go out into its streets and say,

11 Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we are wiping off against you; yet know and understand this: the kingdom of God has come near you.

12 I tell you, it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for that town.

13 Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty miracles performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 However, it shall be more tolerable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you.

15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted unto heaven? 16 He who hears and heeds you [disciples] hears and heeds Me; and he who slights and rejects you slights and rejects Me; and he who slights and rejects Me slights and rejects Him who sent Me.

17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name!

18 And He said to them, I saw Satan falling like a lightning [flash] from heaven.

19 Behold! I have given you authority and power to trample upon serpents and scorpions, and [physical and mental strength and ability] over all the power that the enemy [possesses]; and nothing shall in any way harm you.

20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are enrolled in heaven.

21 *In that same hour He rejoiced and gloried in the Holy Spirit and said, I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have concealed these things [relating to salvation] from the wise and understanding and learned, and revealed them to babes (the childish, unskilled, and untaught). Yes, Father, for such was Your gracious will and choice and good pleasure.*

22 *All things have been given over into My power by My Father; and no one knows Who the Son is except the Father, or Who the Father is except the Son and anyone to whom the Son may choose to reveal and make Him known.*

23 *Then turning to His disciples, He said privately, Blessed (happy, to be envied) are those whose eyes see what you see!*

24 *For I tell you that many prophets and kings longed to see what you see and they did not see it, and to hear what you hear and they did not hear it.*

1 Peter 1:3-9 (Amplified Bible)

3 *Praised (honored, blessed) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (the Messiah)! By His boundless mercy we have been born again to an ever-living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

4 *[Born anew] into an inheritance which is beyond the reach of change and decay [imperishable], unsullied and unfading, reserved in heaven for you,*

5 *Who are being guarded (garrisoned) by God's power through [your] faith [till you fully inherit that final] salvation that is ready to be revealed [for you] in the last time.*

6 *[You should] be exceedingly glad on this account, though now for a little while you may be distressed by trials and suffer temptations,*

7 *So that [the genuineness] of your faith may be tested, [your faith] which is infinitely more precious than the perishable gold which is tested and purified by fire. [This proving of your faith is intended] to redound to [your] praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ (the Messiah, the Anointed One) is revealed.*

8 *Without having seen Him, you love Him; though you do not [even] now see Him, you believe in Him and exult and thrill with inexpressible and glorious (triumphant, heavenly) joy.*

9 *[At the same time] you receive the result (outcome, consummation) of your faith, the salvation of your souls.*

No matter what the Christian's situation, we always have this to rejoice about.

Another motivation for Joy is....

B. The Realization of the Lord's Presence

Psalm 16:11 (Amplified Bible)

11 You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy, at Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore.

There are many Psalms where David rejoices about being in the presence of the Lord. Is His presence your greatest joy? Have you experienced His presence in your life?

He talks about pleasures, but pleasures are fleeting, joy can be constant. Our actions not only show what we believe, but they also show what our greatest joy is.

- o Is it being on the golf course? Our actions will tell.
- o Is it our work? Our Actions will tell.
- o Is it our family? Our Actions will tell.
- o Is it God and our salvation? Our actions will tell.

John 16:20-24 (Amplified Bible)

*20 I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that you shall weep and grieve, but the world will rejoice. **You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.***

*21 A woman, when she gives birth to a child, has grief (anguish, agony) because her time has come. But when she has delivered the child, she **no longer remembers her pain** (trouble, anguish) because she is so glad that a man (a child, a human being) has been born into the world.*

*22 So **for the present** you are also in sorrow (in distress and depressed); but I will see you again and [then] your hearts will rejoice, and **no one can take from you your joy** (gladness, delight).*

23 And **when that time comes, you will ask nothing of Me** [you will need to ask Me no questions]. I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, that My Father will grant you whatever you ask in My Name [as presenting all that I AM].

24 Up to this time you have not asked a [single] thing in My Name [as presenting all that I AM]; **but now ask and keep on asking and you will receive, so that your joy (gladness, delight) may be full and complete.**

What is Jesus saying? He is saying that first of all you will be sad when I am gone, but that will turn to joy when I come back, when I am again in your presence. When I come back your joy will be permanent. Your joy will be full when you ask something in my name directly to the Father or in the presence of the Father, and it is given to you.

Like realizing we are saved, realizing that God the Father and Jesus Christ are present here and now, and forever, should also give us full joy.

Motivation for joy - Then there's:

C. The Possession of God's Word

We have salvation, the presence of the Lord, and we have Gods Word. Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible and it is right at the center of the Bible, and the two verses that are dead center are verses 88 and 89, here's what they say,

Psalm 119:88-89 (Amplified Bible)

88 According to Your steadfast love give life to me; why? then I will keep the testimony of Your mouth [hearing, receiving, loving, and obeying it].

89 Forever, O Lord, Your word is settled in heaven [stands firm as the heavens].

Just about every verse of the 176 verses in Psalm 119 mention His Word, His testimony, His statutes, His commandments, His truth, His law, His rules, His promises, His precepts, in other words the Word of God, the Bible. Don't think it's a coincidence that this is largest and most central chapter in the entire Bible.

Do you understand how blessed we are to have the complete Word of God in as many different translations as we could handle, at our fingertips? Do you know how many people have died for this book. **We have the very presence of God. His word is alive.**

Someone once said that if every Christian in the world blew the dust off their bibles at the same time there would be a cataclysmic dust storm that would end the world. Maybe that's what Jesus is waiting for, maybe that's the final plague. Did you know that only 18% of professing Christians read the Bible everyday?

The Bible is God incarnate, Jesus was called the Word. There would be no church, no Christianity, no world if the Bible did not exist. It has withstood time unlike any artifact in the history of the world. Nothing has been able to destroy it. In fact in spite of severe persecution for centuries it has flourished to become by far the best selling book of all time.

“All Scripture is God-breathed.” “Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.”

Here’s a quote from R.C. Sproul. He wrote the study/curriculum from focus on the family looking at life from a biblical perspective. Each lesson discusses in great detail the relevance and importance of living the Christian worldview in daily life.

His quote in this hammered us, christians about our neglect of studying the Bible. He says:

“Here then is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God’s Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, **but because it is work**. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or passion. **Our problem is that we are lazy.**”

Have you seen the joy on people's faces in third world countries when they receive their first Bible? The possession of this book should be one of our greatest joys and I think the church in general has taken it for granted and tried to make church work without it.

What God says and not what we think needs to be preached!

Another motivation for our joy is:

D. The Conversion of Others

Have you ever been witness to someone's conversion? If you really think about it, is there anything that could be more meaningful. Here is this person, dead in front of your eyes, being made alive forever in that moment by the Spirit of God. This should be as meaningful as the birth of your child, or a loved one being brought back from death by the paddles. It certainly is to God and the heavenly host.

Luke 15:4-7 (Amplified Bible)

4 What man of you, if he has a hundred sheep and should lose one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness (desert) and go after the one that is lost until he finds it?

5 And when he has found it, he lays it on his [own] shoulders, rejoicing.

6 And when he gets home, he summons together [his] friends and [his] neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep which was lost.

7 Thus, I tell you, **there will be more joy** in heaven over one [especially] wicked person who repents (changes his mind, abhorring his errors and misdeeds, and determines to enter upon a better course of life) than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance.

Acts 15:3 (Amplified Bible)

3So, being fitted out and sent on their way by the church, they went through both Phoenicia and Samaria telling of the conversion of the Gentiles (the heathen), and they caused great rejoicing among all the brethren.

We can rejoice about our own salvation, but, do you think Jesus would have been perfectly joyful if he just clung to his own salvation? “Oh thank goodness the Father actually did raise me from the dead. I am not going back down there, I’m going to sit on my throne and just be grateful I’m in heaven, they can fend for themselves.”

We who now believe got saved somehow, often because of another person. Our salvation caused rejoicing in heaven and on earth, do we want to rejoice like that? Well, that’s the churches job????? you and I are the church.

E. The Anticipation of Glory

“Man I can’t wait to get to heaven. I’m dying to see what kind of robe Jesus is wearing, and I’ll finally know whether he actually does have a beard like all the pictures show.”

There will be such amazement and joy we will drop like we’re dead, speechless in our utter amazement. I love the song “I can only Imagine” - the words are speaking for us. Through my own devotions and where God is giving me revelation that is where I’m at...not focusing on the hardships of this world but reminding myself that it’s not to much longer.

remember we read this at the beginning tonight?

1 Peter 1:8 (Amplified Bible)

*8 Without having seen Him, you love Him; though you do not [even] now see Him, you believe in Him and exult and thrill **with inexpressible and glorious (triumphant, heavenly) joy.***

Jude 1:24 (Amplified Bible)

*24 Now to Him Who is able to keep you without stumbling or slipping or falling, and to present [you] unblemished (blameless and faultless) before the presence of His glory **in triumphant joy and exultation [with unspeakable, ecstatic delight]***

Proverbs 10:28 (English Standard Version)

28 The hope of the righteous brings joy;...

Isaiah 29:19-20

19 In that day ...

20...the meek shall obtain fresh joy in the Lord.”

I'll let you read Revelation 21 by yourself, which though it may be symbolic through John's vision, certainly represents his best attempt to describe what heaven will be like, and what Jesus will be like.

The anticipation of what life will be like when we shed these bodies should bring not only joy but incredible awe as well. ... Now let's talk about:

II. The Manifestation of Joy

A. Starting with Church Relations

Anytime I run into someone from church, I get an excited feeling in my gut. I can't wait to get here on Sunday morning to see everybody and Wednesdays. When church is over I always have a bit of a let down.

Seeing other believers brings me joy. And even better, we should, I should be a joy bringer to others we run into. In the book of Philippians this is what brought Paul joy.

1. Remembrance of the people in the church.
2. Christ being proclaimed by others.
3. Deliverance from suffering because of the prayers of others.
4. The church having the same mind and being in full accord.
5. Sacrifice for each other.
6. Receiving other Christians.
7. That others were concerned about him.
8. And he calls his brothers and sisters at the Philippian church his joy and his crown.

Are we a joyful church? Are we happy to see each other? Since day one, it has brought me great joy to see people stick around after the service talking and laughing with each other. When we work as a team when there is some kind of event. I am sure that kind of joyful togetherness makes Jesus smile. ... We also manifest joy:

B. In Difficult Situations

We only have to look as far as Paul when he clearly speaks of the joy in suffering for the cause of Christ:

Romans 5:3-4 (Amplified Bible)

3 Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance.

4 And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of character (approved faith and tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation.

Colossians 1:24 (Amplified Bible)

24[Even] now I rejoice in the midst of my sufferings on your behalf. And in my own person I am making up whatever is still lacking and remains to be completed [on our part] of Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.

James 1:2 (New American Standard Bible)

2 Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

I want to tell you about my Grandfather - this is back in Michigan, Kalamazoo to be exact. My grandfather who had a large farm (800) acres 7 children and the lake effect snow coming off of Lake Michigan was a joyful man. Everyone wanted to be around him, they loved him, he encouraged, never sarcastic, never heard a bad word about anyone come out of his mouth.

Everyone in the church (I lived in Battle Creek till I was 10) and out of the church were always amazed, for no matter what the circumstances, he could always find something to give thanks for. Back in 1977 we had a blizzard - bad blizzard. Snow was 3ft in the flat areas and drifts were up to 10 feet.

No one went to work for a week, snowmobiles got people around and to the main roads. Well the first Sunday after the storm as grandpa made his rounds at church, he lived about 45 minutes from the church and he left 2 hours before to get to church. he was late in getting to worship because of excessive snow drifts.

We had prayer before church and sometimes during the service my father would call on him for a word of encouragement and to pray and everyone was eager to hear what he had to say about the storm that took power out, caused roofs to cave in under the weight, people not to work.

"Gracious Lord," his prayer began, "we thank you that all days are not like today."

This kind of biblical joy is related to a sense of gratitude. Finding something to be grateful for in any situation. Now some will think, **that we are just in denial or aren't being realistic,** but I think it's more a matter of where you choose to focus your mind.

Difficult situations will either help you grow, or they will knock you down, and the difference is simply in how you choose to perceive them. You just need to listen to people's words when bad things happen. "Oh this is the worst thing that could ever happen. I'll never get over this. Etc."

Remember Paul said he learned to be content in any circumstance, and when you read the book of Philippians he showed us that the secret to this is in how we think.

As Christians and Americans we have so much to be joyful about, and our joy needs to be manifest if anyone outside of the believing community is going to be attracted to Christ. Many of you never saw joy in churches growing up and many young people were turned off by the rigid, solemn nature of many churches and Christians.

I am not saying church should be a party, but of all people on earth we should be the most content and joyful because of Christ and the hope that we have for eternity. Joy, the fruit of the Spirit is unexplainable, but if someone is to ask us where our joy comes from, we can tell them it is from the Lord.