



Message Discussion Guide Week of September 25, 2022

Message: Joy (Fruitful series, week 3)

Key Scripture: [John 15:9-12](#)

Preacher: Pastor Jim Gascoine

Message Highlights:

- Being happy is a goal for many people. But most do not achieve it. However, is happiness the same as joy?
- John 15 notes a close connection between love (the first of the Fruits of the Spirit) and joy. Remaining in Christ's love, and following his commandments means that Christ's joy is in us, and our joy is complete. Joy flows in when love opens the door.
- But what exactly is joy? How do we define and how do we recognize it? There is a wealth of scripture passages containing the words joy, joyful or rejoice. And we can discover some patterns as we study those scriptures.
- One pattern: scripture is clear that joy is a result of our connection with God. In other words, joy results from following Jesus, forming a commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- Second pattern: joy is an attribute or quality that is independent of circumstances or situations. Scripture has many passages where the author expresses great joy despite the difficult circumstances in which they live.
- So, joy is a quality rooted in my relationship with Jesus, based on my identity as a child of God, and firmly anchored by the undeniable fact of God's love.

- 1.) Can you think of examples in your life that illustrate the truth that happiness, as an emotional state, is dependent on situation and circumstances?
- 2.) John 15 illustrates a connection between love and joy.

- a. Jesus says, “remain in my love.” Then Jesus says that keeping his commands will mean we remain in his love. How does keeping Jesus’ commands relate to connecting to Jesus’ love?
 - b. The actual command is: Love each other as I have loved you. How would following this produce joy?
 - c. Jesus goes on to say that our joy is complete when his joy is in us. It seems that Jesus is saying that when we are filled with him (or his presence, or his Spirit) we are also filled with his joy – and this produces our joy. What do you think about this?
- 3.) Pastor Jim noted a variety of scripture passages from many sections of the Bible that relate joy to various aspects of our relationship with God and our commitment to Christ.
 - a. How do you build a relationship with God?
 - b. What does it mean to be committed to Christ? What would this look like in my life?
 - c. Pastor Jim noted that joy is a by-product, or result, of our relationship with Jesus. That means that pursuing joy will not produce joy – but pursuing a relationship with Jesus will. Comment on this observation.
- 4.) Pastor Jim noted that a second pattern we see in scripture passages on joy illustrates the truth that joy is independent of our immediate situation or circumstance.
 - a. The Apostle Paul speaks of his joy even while writing from inside a Roman prison.
 - b. The Old Testament prophet Habakkuk spoke of hope amidst of a dark and bleak time for his nation.
 - c. Can you think of other examples, either biblical characters, or contemporary, who exhibited this same quality of joy even in difficult times?
- 5.) Discuss the following points. Do you agree or disagree? Can you perceive this as a reality in your own life?
 - a. Circumstances cannot defeat joy, as it is rooted in our relationship with Jesus. Joy flows from our connection with Christ.
 - b. Circumstances cannot defeat joy, as it is rooted in our identity as children of God and followers of Jesus. Joy flows from our identity.
 - c. Circumstances cannot defeat joy, as it is rooted in the fact of God’s love. Joy flows from God’s love.
- 6.) What are some practical things that you can do in your life in response to this message?