

Advent Series- "The Gift of... Joy"

Luke 2:10-14, Philippians 4:4, John 10:10, Jude 1:24

Joy is connected to surprise and wonder.

Luke 2:10-14

"Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

**¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."**

1. You were made for joy.
2. God wants to give you joy.
3. How to hold on to joy.

We are all on a hunt for happiness.

There is a vital connection between real faith in Jesus - informed by the Gospel and being people of joy.

Phil 4:4

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!

There is something inconsistent with God's work in our lives if it doesn't include joy.

John 16:20

You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.

Jesus is not discounting their grief but Jesus is offering to every believer that when the darkness is bigger than us, something is bigger than the darkness.

Illus. SeeSaw.

Joy is a buoyancy and a lightness that lifts you.

1. Joy is Something you were made for you

C.S. Lewis Quote

"The Christian says, 'Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no

experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.” *Mere Christianity*

Joy is something you were made for because it also true about God.

Galatians 5:22-23

the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control.

Joy is an attribute of God.

Zephaniah reminds us the God delights over us with singing.

Hebrews 1 says that Jesus was anointed with the oil of joy.

2. God wants you to have joy.

In John 2, Jesus turns water into wine.

Consider that Jesus first miracle is making 150 gallons of the best wine because He is moving our lives to experience surprise, joy, and praise.

These clay jars were meant to hold water for ceremonial washing. Our ritual has been exchanged for joy.

The Talmud says, “The world to come is not like this world. In this world there is the trouble of harvesting and treading [of the grapes], but in the world to come a man will bring one grape on a wagon or a ship, put it in a corner of his house and use its contents as [if it had been] a large wine cask, while its timber would be used to make fires for cooking. There will be no grape that will not contain thirty kegs of wine...

Jesus brings abundance.

John 10:10

10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Life is not free of sorrow but a life where sorrow is temporary and joy is lasting.

3. Holding on to joy.

Stay surprised. Don't let our theology become mechanical.

Discover the great Christian reversal.

Joy flows out of a sense of wonder followed by relief.

Jude 1:24

24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy.

Live out of your new life and identity in Jesus.

When we live contrary to character and nature of Jesus that is working itself out in us we lose our joy.

Things that bother your conscience are things that rob your joy.

(Ex. David, Psalm 51)

Joy comes from the unchanging privileges we have from Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4:17

17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

Assurance of salvation is the heart of joy.

Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you during the Sunday gathering?
- Can you recall a gift that truly surprised you?
- What things have you pursued in your life in order to find happiness?
- How is finding happiness like trying to hit a moving target?
- How would you contrast happiness and joy?
- Discuss the idea that although happiness and sadness are opposites, for the Christian joy and sadness can co-exist? Why?
- Discuss the two ways you can lose your joy.
 1. Losing your sense of Christian wonder.
 2. Living contrary to your new identity in Jesus.
- How is joy connected to your assurance of salvation?
- Use this idea to close in prayer. Our joy is connected to our unchanging privileges in Christ.