

## **Joy to the Church, part 2**

(John 15:7-11)

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### **Introduction**

This past Monday Norwegian Cruise Line debuted a renovated cruise ship.

The ship underwent a \$50 million dollar overhaul in hopes of attracting younger couples and young families.

The cruise ship now has 18 restaurants on board..

It has concierge service..

It has a go cart track, multiple movie theaters, state of the art fitness equipment, the latest water park rides and slides.

There are room that range in size from 300 square feet to 1500 square feet and some have their own private pool and hot tub..

Needless to say, this cruise ship is a floating city with every possible form of food and entertainment.

When deciding on a name for this ship, Norwegian officials wanted a simple name that reflected all that this ship offered..

So they simply call the boat, “Joy.”

In case you are wondering, the ship has already been booked for all of 2019 and through the summer of 2020.

But let me remind you..

That ship is not a lasting source of joy.

Yes, it will be fun for a few days or a week, but it will bring you back to port and you will have to disembark.

We just returned from vacation with our family...

We enjoyed 7 days of sun, food, family, rest and that certainly brought joy to us, but on Saturday morning, we packed up the car and headed back home.

And that is not always easy..

In fact, the days after a cruise or a trip or a vacation of any sort can even be difficult for people.

There is even a name for it on the internet.

Post vacation blues are described as the the feelings of discouragement or despair or even depression that often come after a long trip or time away from a person's normal routine.

Doctors even offer advice for coping with post vacation blues..

Some say that looking at photos or gifts purchased on the trip are helpful..

Some say that calling or talking to family and friends who were with you on the vacation eases your mind..

One doctor says that relief can often be found in trying to re-live some aspects of vacation..

Quote..

***“if one really enjoyed jet-skiing during their holiday, they may purchase their very own jet-ski for personal use.”***

I like that idea, so we are to begin shopping for a beach house..

I am just kidding, but it amazing the lengths that people will go to in hopes of finding the joy that they had while on vacation..

Cruise ships, beach trips, and vacations are nice but they do not last forever, so how does a person find and sustain everyday joy?

Well, above all, a person must realize that lasting joy cannot be found in a temporary experience..

Now, some people never learn this.

In fact, their lives are defined by an unending search for lasting joy in a fallen world..

In fact, the smartest man who ever lived wasted the majority of his life doing just that..

Solomon searched the world over for joy, but never found it in anything this world offered..

He did eventually find that joy but only when he looked up instead of around..

Sadly, there are people today spending truckloads of money in search of lasting joy..

Sadly, there are people with advanced educational degrees who act like fools in search of lasting joy.

Sadly, there may be in this room what have looked for lasting joy their entire lives but have yet to find any..

The good news is that the prescription for lasting joy will be offered to you today in John 15:1-11..

We began this section last week and Lord willing, we will finish it this morning...

So if you want your joy to be full and complete, don't look to the world, look to this passage that I am about to read to us.

John 15:1-11..

*1 "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. 2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He [a]prunes it so that it may bear more fruit. 3 You are already [b]clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. 4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit [c]of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned. 7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so [d]prove to be My disciples. 9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things*

***I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.***

John 15 is most likely a conversation that happened in the middle of the night as Jesus walked through Jerusalem with 11 disciples.

It would be the final night of Jesus' earthly life because these men would eventually arrive in a little garden spot outside of Jerusalem where Jesus would be arrested.

A phony Jewish trial would be convened in the middle of the night where Jesus would be found guilty and sent to the Romans, who would execute Him on Friday afternoon.

Yet with all the knowledge of what was coming, Jesus is concentrating on these men.

And the reason he is concentrating on them is because of his great love for them and because of the important mission that was coming to them.

They are going to be tasked with taking the story of his life to the world.

They are going to be taking the news of salvation to a lost world.

So they must be prepared for that enormous privilege.

However on this night, they are filled with discouragement and fear.

And the source of the anxiety is that Jesus keeps telling them that He is going away...

The One who has cared for these men for the past 3 years..

The One who has protected these men for the past 3 years...

The One who has taught these men like no one ever taught them for the past 3 years is leaving..

But God has not called His people to fear and anxiety and depression, so Jesus set out in chapter 14 to give them peace..

They needed to stop focuses on their troubles.

First, they were saved and headed to heaven.

Second, they were called to do great things for Jesus after he left.

Third, they would not be alone as the Father Son and Spirit would be with them in their mission.

But not only do these troubled men need peace, they also need joy.

They need to preach with peace and they need to preach with joy.

So Jesus uses the first part of John 15 to lay out the recipe for joy, and last week we got through 3 reasons for joy..

### **I. Joy Comes from Absolute Sovereignty (1-3)**

First, joy is the result of recognizing God's sovereignty in our lives...

We have been grafted into the vine of Christ in salvation and we are being pruned constantly by the Father..

Simply put, there is joy in knowing that God has us in hand.

We are not responsible to save ourselves or to stay saved, but he grafted us into the vine of Christ and he prunes us as fruit bearing branches.

Joy is knowing that our salvation and sanctification is in the hands of God.

A second source of joy that we looked at last week is this..



## **II. Joy Comes from Attachment to Christ (4-5)**

Verses 4 and 5 are reminders to these men that they are attached to Christ.

Yes, He may be going away but their connection to Him is not going away.

And because of that, good works are going to flow from their lives.

The same is true of us.

Attachment to Christ is a guarantee of good works, and that is a source of joy.

And then the final note we made last week is that believers have joy because we have been rescued from punishment..

## **III. Joy Comes from Avoiding Hell (6)**

Verse 6..

***6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch and dries up; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire and they are burned.***

You cannot ignore the joy that comes from believers knowing that they have avoided the wrath of God.

That brings us to verses 7-11 of John 15 which is going to add 4 reasons that believers should have joy...

Reason #4 is found in verse 7.

#### **IV. Joy Comes from Answered Prayer (7)**

I grew up in an era of rotary phones.

As a kid, I remember learning to dial my grandparents phone number by putting my index finger in a hole and pulling it around to the stop and letting it go.

It was a glorious time of long cords and and loud rings.

Then came the cordless home phone, which seems like a miracle.

You could talk and not be attached to the phone.

You could walk outside and talk on the phone.

Then the cell phone came and the world is now drastically different.

Now, people can contact you nearly anywhere at any time.

But this has created more anxiety.

Because now if you call and no one answers, the caller often takes offense.

Used to be if you called and no one answered, you would simply say that the person wasn't at home.

But now people can assume (and often do) that you are ignoring their call, which can be frustrating on both ends.

We now live in an era where people come to expect their calls and their texts to be answered immediately..

And why is that?

Well, there is s a sense of joy in connecting to others.

You feel appreciated when someone takes the time to answer or respond.

The great reality for the believer is that God responds to the calls of His people.

God answers the prayers of his people.

Faced with the reality that Jesus is about to leave them, these men have doubts about how well their lives will go without Christ.

What will they do?

How will they know what to do?

But look at what Jesus says to these 11 men in verse 7..

***7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.***

For these men, their physical connection with Jesus will end, but their spiritual connection to Him will continue.

He will answer their requests through He will know longer be with them physically.

Look, there is joy in knowing that I have access to God in prayer.

No busy signal.

No missed calls.

No voicemail.

No unanswered texts.

Sadly, we take prayer for granted.

We forget about the access that we have been given to the very throne room of God.

In case that describes you, let me say this...

Imagine having no access to God in prayer.

Imagine praying and having your prayers never going anywhere.

Think an unanswered call is frustrating.

Imagine the sadness of praying into thin air.

Yet, that is a reality for every unbeliever.

They may pray but nothing is done in response to their prayers.

When you are tempted to despair, find joy in knowing that you have unlimited access to God in prayer.

A 5th reason for joy is found in verse 8..

## **V. Joy Comes from Assurance of Salvation (8)**

***8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so [d]prove to be My disciples.***

The #1 questions that I have been asked in ministry relates to assurance of salvation.

How can I know that I am saved?

I hear it all the time, and it is a great question.

In fact, its the most important question that you can ever ask yourself..

The good news is that the Bible provides an answer for that question.

The genuineness of your salvation doesn't have to be a mystery.

In fact, the book of 1 John provides a place for you to test to see if you are saved.

And so does the book of James..

But right here in verse 8 may be the shortest test of salvation..

And it is this.

Is your life bearing fruit of salvation?

In other words, are you doing the things that Christians do?

Namely, are you obeying the Bible?

Is your life in line with the Scriptures?

I don't want to re-preach last week's message, but the Bible is crystal clear that real, genuine, biblical believers always bear fruit of salvation.

Now, let me say this to clear up any confusion.

Can an unbeliever do good things?

Sure, unbelievers can be generous.

They can be kind.

They can be patient.

But ultimately, none of those good things are patterns in their life.

Verse 8 says that believers bear much fruit.



Look, anyone can reform themselves for a short and even produce what appears to be the fruit of salvation.

But ultimately, that display of false fruit comes to an end.

Genuine believers simply continue to bear a lifetime of fruit.

And the result of that consistent production of fruit is a growing assurance of salvation.

Most new Christians struggle with assurance of salvation issues..

Their lives are just beginning to change as the Spirit does His work in them, but doubts creep in and assurance of salvation is assaulted..

But over time, the production of much fruit leads to the joy that comes from much assurance..

There is no joy like the joy of knowing that you belong to Lord.

There is no joy like the joy of being assured of heaven when you die.

There is no joy of knowing that your sins have been erased by your genuine belief in Christ.

Assurance brings joy, and the way to assurance is to look at the production of fruit in your life.

A 6th source of joy in Christian life is found in verses 9-11...

## **VI. Joy Comes from an Ability to Love (9-10)**

***9 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. 10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.***

Simply put, believers should have joy because they know what it is like to be truly loved and to truly love others...

The most misunderstood and misused word in the English language is love.

We use the word “love” for all sorts of things where it clearly doesn’t apply.

People “love” all sorts of things.

But true love.

Real love.

Must come from God.

God is a God of love, so we only know love from God.

If you are a believer in here today, you know what love is.

You have seen the love of God and experienced the love of God in the gospel.

But you have also been equipped to love others as God loved you..

Listen to Luke 6:32..

***32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, [t]expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.***

Only God can give you the ability to love those who hate you.

Only God can give you the ability to love those that persecute you.

Only God can give you the ability to love your enemies.

Let me tell you something..

We should lie filled with joy simply because our hearts are filled with love for God and for others..

These 11 disciples are going to be the enemies of the world.

They are going to be despised.

They are going to be attacked.

They are going to be mocked and spit upon and eventually chased down and killed because of their missions to take the gospel to the world.

Yet, their lives will be full of joy because their hearts will be full of love for their enemies.

In case you are wondering, that is not natural.

In fact, we are recipients of supernatural love and we should express supernatural love for others..

And when we do express that love, it should be a joy to our hearts..

A final source of joy in your life is found in verse 11..

We will call this..

## **VII. Joy Comes from Appeasing Christ (11)**

I played basketball in middle and high school.

I was never that good, but I had a couple great coaches..

Men who pushed me to get better and improve.

My 10th grade year, our team had lost 24 straight games..

But I desperately wanted to win one not so much for me, but to please our coach who put in so much time and effort with the team.

We did eventually win a game that year.

We even won 3.

But the most pleasing that about the season was giving our coach a win.

There are people in our life that we like to please..

A spouse; An employer; A customer.

In verse 11, listen to what Jesus tells these men.

***11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.***

Simply put, Christ is pleased when his people find their joy in Him.

Isaiah describes Christ as a man of sorrows, and that was certainly true of his ministry on earth.

Yet, Christ found joy in these 11 men.

He finds joy in the obedience of his people today.

There is a joy in my life that comes from pleasing the Lord.

Am I always pleasing to Him?

No.

But is my life more pleasing to Him than it was?

Absolutely yes.

I often tell people that it is good to read the Bible and find yourself in obedience to what you read...

It also good to be in Sunday School class or preaching and listen to messages and find yourself already doing those things..

Nobody said that Bible reading and preaching have to always be painful..

In fact, as you mature in your faith.

You should find Bible reading and teaching more and more pleasant to your soul..

And you should find your life more and more in line with what Scripture says..

And when that happens, the Lord is pleased, and that is always a reason to be joyful.

To be pleasing to God is the highest joy a man can find.



## **Conclusion**

So there you are..

7 Sources of Joy for the Genuine Believer.

Joy Comes from Absolute Sovereignty

Joy Comes from Attachment to Christ

Joy Comes from Avoiding Hell (6)

Joy Comes from Answered Prayer (7)

Joy Comes from Assurance of Salvation (8)

Joy Comes from An Ability to Love (9-10)

Joy Comes from Appeasing Christ (11)

And I want to add this....

In the 1800s, Napoleon had dreams of conquering the world.

So he began to send his generals all over Europe in hopes of winning it country by country.

One of the generals named Andre Massena had his heart set on conquering Austria..

As he marched through Austria one spring, he arrived on the outskirts of an Austrian town with 18000 French troops.

It was the Saturday before Easter and the town had no one to defend it.

Seeing that defeat was imminent, they called a town meeting to discuss what to do.

Though they were assured of defeat, they decided to hold church services on Easter Sunday and surrender on Monday.

As Massena and his troops waited to invade on Sunday, they heard the church bells begin to ring.

Massena mistakenly thought that such a joyous ringing must be the town celebrating the arrival of troops.

Therefore, he decided to retreat rather than invade and the town was saved despite the fact that there was no one to defend them.

Look, sometimes the joy of believers is an incredible weapon.

To have joy in such a sad world speaks volumes of who we are as God's people.

I want to encourage you church to not be drawn into the world's misery.

We are not people of despair and depression.

We are not people of hopelessness and defeat.

WE are people of joy.

Our sins are gone.

Our God is King.

And our home is heaven.

May we live like we believe that.

Let us pray.