

Group Resource

Sermon Notes – Sunday, October 27, 2014

Series: Navigating through the ups and downs of real.life

Message: Is Your Joy Complete?

Scripture: John 15:9-11

- I. In this series, we have examined several key principles that we must learn so that we can successfully navigate through the ups and downs of life and experience the life that God intended for us. Those principles include:
 - a. Trusting in the Lord and not succumbing to worry. If we know our value in God, we will also know that we can entrust our lives to His Lordship.
 - b. Being faithful in the few things will position us for greater stewardship responsibility.
 - c. Learning how to run the race that God has set out for us and walking in victory even when obstacles are in the way.
 - d. Get rid of weights that hinder us: competition/comparison and covetousness
 - e. Discovering how to walk in God's complete and powerful joy and be refilled in His presence
- II. The life that God desires for us includes experiencing abundant joy while on this earth and after this life, eternal joy in His presence. While happiness changes from day-to-day, our joy should always be consistent.
- III. **True joy is an inexhaustible fruit of the Spirit that enables believers to rejoice in God's sovereignty and enjoy the confidence of knowing that His supernatural strength is at work within us.**
- IV. In John 15, Jesus encourages believers to abide in Him. He declares: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." In verse 11, Jesus says, "I have told you this so that **my joy may be in you** and that **your joy may be complete.**"
 - a. Two key principles can be derived from Jesus' instructions: (1) **True joy can only be inherited from Jesus** and (2) **true joy is sustaining and complete.**
 - b. We can also make contrasting inferences from Jesus' instructions. Instead of inheriting true joy from Jesus, we can try to draw strength from another source but it cannot sustain us and is illegitimate. For example, joy derived from our own accomplishments and satisfaction can at best be, short-lived and volatile, and at worst, emotionally damaging and inauthentic.
 - c. While our source of joy may be found in Jesus, we must also make sure that our joy is complete in Him. We must guard against incomplete or depleted joy.
- V. **1 – Why can true joy only be inherited from Jesus?**
 - a. If our joy is based on circumstances that constantly change – then our joy will constantly be in flux. The joy that Jesus experienced was consistent joy regardless of His circumstances.
 - i. *Jesus' joy was centered on an eternal perspective.* Jesus had a mindset that there would always be the opportunity to look at His immediate circumstances and be disappointed. However, when Jesus placed circumstances such as the journey to the Cross in perspective against eternity, He could rejoice because He knew that God was up to something.
 - ii. *Jesus' joy was unselfish and sacrificial.* Jesus was more concerned with obeying God's instructions so that God's will would be fulfilled rather than doing things for His own gain.

- iii. The Writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 12:2 *Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
 - 1. We don't often equate joy with endurance – but endurance is the only way that we get to the other side of the journey to put things in proper perspective.
 - 2. John 16:21 reminds us that *“A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world.”* Jesus encouraged all believers that there will be a time in which we will see Jesus again and no one will take away our joy. Until then, we get glimpses into seeing the eternal will of God being fulfilled in the earth. If we don't endure until the end – we will never get the proper perspective of how our immediate actions are making a difference for eternity.
- iv. Since Jesus invites us to inherit his joy, we don't have to manufacture joy out of our own strength.
 - 1. Jesus gives a simple instruction to tap into his joy. He is the vine and we are the branches. Remain in Him. *Psalms 16:11 (KJV) In thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*
 - 2. You cannot choose to have joy a la carte. It starts with a more fundamental choice: choosing to abide and remain in God and He in us!
 - 3. What are you powered by? 100% Godly Joy or Variable Rate Earthly Joy
- v. *Not only does true joy come from Jesus Christ but walking in joy is a choice that we must make*

- VI. Even though we can inherit Jesus' joy, choosing to walk in that joy is a choice
 - a. Jesus' joy came through his reliance on God and his obedience to his Father's will. We inherit not only His joy but the capacity given through the Spirit to enjoy God in the same manner
 - b. When driving in a rotary, you have to make two distinct places of change. Entering the rotary and getting out. It can be comfortable to stay in the rotary but you will only go in circles. At some point, in order to move forward, you have to take a risk and exit at the right place in the rotary.
 - c. Once we have made the choice to abide in God – we must still choice to rejoice in God's sovereignty and enjoy his blessings. Sometimes we have to rejoice in faith, knowing that God is able to use circumstances that are not desired for His glory and honor. **Philippians 4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!
 - d. Christian joy leads to faith and obedience. Too often we say “I don't have joy” but that is equivalent to saying “I don't have Jesus.” Instead, we must acknowledge that our joy has been depleted and allow God to recharge our joy and faith in His presence.
 - e. As a pastor, one of the most frequently asked questions is how do I have joy through the valley experiences. My answer is that we have joy the same way that we have joy in the mountaintop experiences.
 - i. It I make my sufficiency in Jesus Christ as Lord of all, it frees me to enjoy mountaintop and valley experiences because I know that in both places, He is with me. The Psalmist recounted this truth in **Psalms 23: Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

- ii. Our earthly circumstances seek to rob us of the joy of Christ being the all-sufficient one for our lives. We build our sufficiency in Him through everyday moments where God transforms our heart to realize that He is sovereign. We must learn how to exercise our joy through outward expressions!
- f. If there is joy in His presence, We have to learn to retreat in His presence until our grief turns to joy, our sadness is overrun by joy, our shame is conquered by joy and our defeats are declared less important than our joy in Him.
- g. Our final reminder must be that God has designed every season as a necessary part of our life. We must choose to walk in Jesus' joy no matter what season that we are experiencing.
 - i. **Ecclesiastes 3:1–8** **1** There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: **2** a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, **3** a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, **4** a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, **5** a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, **6** a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, **7** a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, **8** a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.
 - ii. Rejoice no matter what season you are in!

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Let's Talk Notes – Sunday, October 27, 2014

Series: Navigating through the ups and downs of real.life

Message: Is Your Joy Complete?

Scripture: John 15:9-11

- 1) As you reflect back on last weekend's sermon, what one principle or insight stands out as being particularly helpful, insightful or difficult to grasp?
- 2) Read aloud Pastor Joseph's definition of true joy: *"True joy is an inexhaustible fruit of the Spirit that enables believers to rejoice in God's sovereignty and enjoy the confidence of knowing that His supernatural strength is at work within us."* What makes true joy different from worldly joy or happiness?
- 3) **Read Hebrews 11:13-16.** What does living as a "foreigner and stranger on earth" look like? How does this perspective affect our ability to walk in joy and rejoice in all things?
- 4) Have you ever struggled to walk in the joy that Christ gives? How can you rejoice and find your sufficiency in Him when your joy is incomplete or depleted? As you examine your life, are there any joy stealers that you have allowed easy access into your life?
- 5) **Read John 9:1-5.** Has God ever unveiled to you how your circumstances were a part of His larger will? If so, share your experience. What did you learn about God? How has that experience shaped your perspective towards challenges in your life?
- 6) Look at the following list of ways that you can spend time abiding in God's presence. Which areas do you currently practice? Which areas would you like to incorporate into your rhythm?

Meditating on Scripture
 Listening to an Audio Bible/Sermon
 Reading a passage of Scripture
 Memorizing Scripture
 Listening to Worship Music/Hymns
 Singing songs of Praise and Thanksgiving
 Journaling/writing prayers and insight
 Reviewing sermon notes
 Praying aloud
 Speaking in tongues

Taking a prayer walk
 Using creative arts to meditate on Scripture (draw/paint/song)
 Doing a Topical Bible Study
 Taking a Personal Retreat
 Scheduling a devotional "appointment."
 Reading one Psalm each day.
 Praying on your knees
 Praying Scripture back to God.
 Praying with a prayer partner

- 7) Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us that there is a time for everything and a season for every activity. The Apostle Paul had to run his race with a thorn in his flesh. What are some hurdles that are a part of the race that God has called you to run.
- 8) Share one principle from the navigating through the ups and downs of real.life series that has impacted you.