

The Joy of Jesus
John 15:11; 17:13; Hebrews 12:2

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart,
 Down in my, down in my heart.

I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart,
 Down in my heart to stay.

Maybe like me, many of you sang that little chorus growing up in Sunday school.

C. S. Lewis once stated that “joy is the serious business of heaven.”

The gospels open with joy.

Mary expresses joy at becoming the mother of the Messiah.

The angels proclaim joy to the world at His birth. The shepherds are joyful when they see the newborn Christ.

Simeon and Anna respond with joy at welcoming the Savior.

The Magi come to worship the newborn king, which is an expression of joy.

Many of the Psalms express joy.

The book of Philippians is about joy.

In spite of the judgments found in Revelation, it is a book of joy celebrating the triumph of Jesus and the unending joy of heaven.

Christians have reason to be joyful, yet how many lack real joy?

Is joy something you experience?

Paul exhorts believers in **I Thessalonians 5:16** “**Be joyful always.**”

In **Philippians 4:4**, he urges believers to “**Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!**”

Joy is to be the ongoing experience of the believer, yet, unfortunately, we allow any number of things to rob us of real joy.

We let the actions or criticisms of people rob us of our joy. It could be the person who cuts in front of us at the check out lane.

It could be the motorist who cuts us off in traffic.

It could be the neighbor who gossips untruths about us to other neighbors.

People can do any number of things that rob joy.

Trials and circumstances can rob us of our joy. We mumble the words “nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen” but forget the rest of the song “nobody knows but Jesus.” Without joy we take on an Eeyore ‘woe is me’ complex. The slightest trouble and it sucks the joy right out of us like an old turkey baster.

An unexpected or untimely illness or injury.

A pink slip from the boss.

An auto accident.

James 1:2 tells us to “**consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of various kinds.**” When we have problems and trials, we can lose sight of their intended purpose to help us mature in our faith. We fail to see that they are meant to be for God’s glory and our good. When we neglect or ignore the sovereignty of God in allowing those trials or maybe blame Him for them, it robs us of joy.

Something else that can rob us of joy is sin. When we dwell on what we have done that offends God, we let the guilt steal our joy instead of confessing it and experiencing His forgiveness. The devil wants us to feel miserable. He doesn’t want us to be joyful. King David said in **Psalms 32:3** “**When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.**” Sin strips away our joy.

In his psalm of confession after his adulterous affair with Bathsheba he wrote “**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones which You have crushed rejoice.**” (**Psalm 51:8**)

Other joy robbers include things like anger, hatred, bitterness, malice, unforgiveness, and revenge. Any time we hold something against someone else, we let those emotions and attitudes steal our joy.

If you don’t have joy, it might be one of these joy robbers. As believers, we are to be a joyful people, but too often we let many of those things rob us of the joy we should have. So this morning I want to take a look at the joy of Jesus because, as we will discover, He wants us to have His joy.

Recently on Wednesday night we talked about joy and happiness, so if some of this sounds familiar, it

is. Without realizing there is a difference, people want to use them interchangeably.

The word happiness is akin to the word happen both of which come from the root word hap, which means to come about by chance. I take it to mean that happiness happens by chance. When things are favorable, when things are going our way, we happily hum along with Oscar Hammerstein
Oh what a beautiful morning'

Oh what a beautiful day

I've got a beautiful feeling

Everything's going my way.

But when the rains of life pour on our parade, we're more apt to sing along with the gang from Hee Haw:

Gloom despair and agony on me.

Deep dark depression excessive misery.

If it weren't for bad luck I'd have no luck at all.

Gloom despair and agony on me.

Happiness is defined as a state favored by circumstances, luck or fortune; having, showing, or causing a feeling of great pleasure, contentment, joy that come from circumstances that are favorable for us. Happiness doesn't generally last long and ebbs and flows with what's happening in the moment. Happiness changes and doesn't last. While it is equated with feelings of pleasure and contentment, it should not be confused with joy.

People tend to find happiness in situations that give them a positive sense of good fortune. It might come from a hobby they enjoy, having a good job, a satisfactory marriage, when everything is going their way, limited debt, good health, and so on.

Finding happiness gives people a euphoric feeling that everything is right as rain, leaving them with a sense of contentment, but the moment something changes so does their happiness. The goal is to be at ease with everything and everyone.

In their book [The Unshakable TRUTH](#), Josh and Sean McDowell write that although the earning power of the boomer generation has more access to things that they think bring happiness, like sports, travel, leisure, entertainment, and money, their rate

of depression increased tenfold from the previous generation. This was due to a shift in focus on self. When one's pursuit is on pleasure, the result is a self-centered focus. This kind of happiness is always short-lived because we cannot find enough to satisfy that craving for contentment. Solomon found that out in **Ecclesiastes 5:10-17; 6:7** where he writes that whatever you pursue in this life does not satisfy.

They suggest that *“when our focus is primarily on the pursuit of our own pleasure, happiness is generally short-lived. Our lives will become empty, depressed, and void of real meaning.” Do you agree?*

All you have to do is look at the façade many in Hollywood portray who would be characterized as having everything and yet how empty, shallow, and unhappy many of them are. The reach for happiness is short lived.

J.P. Moreland states *“If happiness is having an internal feeling of fun or pleasurable satisfaction, and if it is our main goal, where will we place our focus all day long? The focus will be on us, and the result will be a culture of self-absorbed individuals who can't live for something larger than we are.”*

Everywhere we go, we are bombarded with the message to do whatever it takes to be happy, to feel good about yourself because your happiness is the most important thing in the world. Advertisers play to your need for happiness through whatever product they're selling because whatever gizmo you have right now isn't making you feel happy or feel good about yourself. The problem is that those things will never make you happy.

When it comes to joy, secular sources define it similarly to happiness: a feeling of great pleasure. It is further defined as an emotion brought on by well-being, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what you desired. In that respect, it's not much different than happiness and also depends on circumstances. But the Bible teaches us something entirely different about the character of joy. Joy is a trait of God that is a divinely developed attribute

through the inworking of the Holy Spirit as we see in **Galatians 5:22** – The fruit of the Spirit is joy.

Romans 15:13

I Peter 1:8-9

Where happiness is circumstantial and relies on whether things are good in my life, joy is divinely produced through our yielding to the Holy Spirit who develops that characteristic within us and is therefore not subject to circumstances. When we allow the Holy Spirit to develop the fruit of joy in us, joy rises above circumstances, joy isn't lost the minute something bad happens.

Joy is not found in people, possessions, positions, or programs. It is only found in the Person of Jesus and can only be produced through a personal relationship with Him. We gain joy (and it's resulting peace) when we abide in Christ. Abiding in Christ means to remain, live in, trust, and welcome Christ; to obey Him. It is an intimate relationship of surrender and enjoyment of being in His presence. When Christ is at home in us and we are at home with Him, we experience a joy that can be explained no other way than because of His ever-abiding presence. In **John 15:1-17** we learn what it means to abide in Christ and in the middle of that abiding is joy, His joy.

In the first passage we will look at, we see that it's a continuous joy through Jesus.

I. IT'S A CONTINUOUS JOY THROUGH JESUS – **John 15:11a**

The idea of continuous joy, I think, is more clearly stated in the KJV where it says that Jesus wants His joy to **remain** in us. But that is only possible if we are abiding in Him and He in us. Abiding isn't just a casual relationship but one of intimacy. In **chapter 14**, Jesus explained the nature of that relationship when He told the disciples that the Father would be sending the Holy Spirit (**v. 26**). The moment we trust Christ as Savior, the instant that happens, the Holy Spirit takes up residence in us. He is our guide on this journey we call the Christian life. When that happens there is joy from the Spirit's presence.

A. There Is Joy From the Spirit's Presence

The Holy Spirit is the abiding presence who develops in us the character or quality of joy in each believer. But again, the degree of its development is how much we allow Him to abide in us. Again, we see that from **Galatians 5:22** where the Spirit produces His joy in us. This isn't something we can manufacture or reproduce on our own. It doesn't come from good circumstances. Joy comes from no other source than from the Holy Spirit.

Back in **John 10:10**, Jesus said that He came to give us life and to give us life to the full. In **14:27**, Jesus said He is giving us His peace. When we abide in Him and He is in us we experience His love and peace and joy. And isn't that what we gain when we allow the Holy Spirit to develop His fruit in us? (**Galatians 5:22**)

In **chapter 15** leading up to **verse 11**, Jesus says He did things that pleased the Father, that means in everything He did He was obedient. Now that obedience wasn't out of duty to the Father, but out of love for the Father. Complete obedience to the Father's will brought Him joy, a joy He wants us to experience as well as we too, obey God's will because we love Him.

Without showing hands, how many of you obeyed your parents or teacher or boss because you had to, you obeyed out of duty? When you obeyed out of duty, did you feel joy? Now, think about the times you obeyed your parents or teacher or boss because you wanted to, you loved them and had a great relationship with them. Did you have joy then? My guess is you did. The difference in what you experienced is the difference between duty and delight. If we want to experience the joy of Jesus that He wants us to have, our desire should parallel the psalmist who wrote "**I delight to do Your will, O God, Your law is within my heart.**" (**Ps. 40:8**)

The closer I am in my relationship with Robyn, the more joy I will have in doing something that she wants me to do. That relational presence changes my attitude from duty to delight. It's not nagging, it's joyful.

If we aren't experiencing the continuous joy of Jesus, maybe it's because we are abiding in His presence through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Psalm 21:6 "You make him most blessed forever; You make Him glad with the joy of Your presence."

There are at least four evidences of abiding that produce joy.

1. Obedience out of love to Christ's commands

John 15:10

I John 3:24

2. Following the example of Jesus

I John 2:6

3. Living free of habitual sin

I John 3:6

4. Being aware of God's presence in your life

I John 4:13 (Romans 8:9)

Psalm 16:11

J. Vernon McGee writes "A life in fellowship with Christ is a joyous life."

Is there joy from the Spirit's presence?

Next, there is joy from spiritual growth.

B. There Is Joy From Spiritual Growth

GotQuestions states "As the Holy Spirit works in us to bear more fruit, we become confident in God's promises and rejoice in our walk with Him and with other believers."

What parent isn't filled with joy when they see progress in growth in their child?

They are filled with joy when they roll over, when they start to say their first words, when they get their first tooth, when they start to walk. Milestones bring lots of joy. But when those milestones are missed, they grow concerned.

It's the same with spiritual growth for a believer. We are filled with joy as we watch the Holy Spirit's work mature them. Paul knew that joy as he witnessed the spiritual growth in churches.

II Corinthians 1:24 "Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy,

because it is by faith you stand firm"

I Thessalonians 2:19-20 "For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when He comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy."

John 15:11 states that the joy of Jesus comes from obedience, which is evidence of spiritual maturity.

Paul speaks of joy in **Philippians 2:2** when believers in a local church are in unity in love, in mind, and in purpose.

Passages like **Hebrews 10:34; 12:2** and **James 1:2-4** state that there is joy when believers follow the example of Jesus and endure under trials. Such perseverance is the result of spiritual maturity.

Joy is not the absence or exclusion of pain or sorrow. When we have the abiding presence of the Spirit living and working in us, we experience joy in spite of the sorrow. Jesus was a man of sorrow (**Isaiah 53:3**) yet He was full of joy because He was doing what the Father asked Him to do.

Consider all that Paul endured on account of the gospel and yet he could write that he was "yet **always rejoicing.**" (**II Corinthians 6:10**).

Remember that when he wrote Philippians, he was sitting in prison, yet it is a book filled with joy.

Fullness of joy through abiding in Christ, will always include sorrow in this world because we live in a fallen world, with a sin nature that continues to tempt us. But in the world to come, the heaven we are waiting for John Piper says "fullness of joy in the age to come means so much joy that all competing, contrary emotions will be gone."

Is your joy in Jesus continuous, or do you allow other things to rob you of the joy Jesus wants you to have?

Second, it's not only a continuous joy through Jesus but a complete joy from Jesus.

II. IT'S A COMPLETE JOY FROM JESUS – **John 15:11b; 17:13**

From the International Bible Encyclopedia, we

discover that the verb **“complete”** is used for something coming to pass of what had been predicted; expressing the final and entire attainment of what is treated, leaving nothing beyond to be desired or hoped for.

At the fall of Adam and Eve when they disobeyed God, they were spiritually separated from God because of their sin. We could say that they were now incomplete because the relationship that was meant to be was now broken. With Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross it’s a joy that saves for eternity.

A. It’s A Joy That Saves For Eternity

Our greatest reason for joy is not only because Jesus **came** to save us, but that He **does** save us through His death on the cross and resurrection three days later. His resurrection affirms that God the Father accepted His sacrifice and because of that approval it guarantees our salvation. In addition, He not only wants to save us but also wants us to spend eternity with us.

John 14:1-3 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father’s house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.”

There is no other person that I would rather spend time with than my wife. I look forward to the end of the day when I can see her. I look forward to seeing her when she returns from a business trip. I look forward to talking to her on the phone. She is my best friend and she feels the same way about me, too. But when I get to heaven, the joy of my salvation will be complete because I will get to gaze on the one who died to make it possible for me to be there and I will much rather spend my time with Him in His presence.

We have joy because Jesus saves for eternity. But we don’t have to wait until heaven to experience the fullness of the joy of Jesus. That can be ours now, a joy that helps us rise above circumstance and it’s a joy that satisfies forever.

B. It’s A Joy That Satisfies Forever

It doesn’t take me very long to think of someone who had that kind of joy. She endured cancer, chemo, and an amputation due to the cancer. When she had her third bout with cancer, she still maintained a joyful spirit. My mom is an example of what it is to know complete joy beyond salvation. She had a joy that satisfied daily. She found the joy of the Lord to be her strength.

Sometimes you may find that I sign a card or an email with the words **“may the joy of the Lord be your strength.”** (**Nehemiah 8:10**) We experience that joy now.

The joy of the Lord is of supernatural origin. It’s can also be described as gladness of heart. When we are controlled by the Holy Spirit, His joy is present even though we experience trials, no matter what they are. In **Acts 5:41** after the release of Peter and John from prison, it says they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for Christ. That’s a joy that satisfies even in trials.

When Paul and Silas sat in the Philippian jail with feet and hands bound in stocks even though their legal rights had been violated, arrested and beaten without cause, they still sang with joy.

An unbeliever cannot know this kind of joy, he cannot possess this kind of joy. But for the believer, the joy of the Lord is the supernatural outpouring of a life yielded to the work of the indwelling and abiding Holy Spirit in us.

John MacArthur writes: **“Joy came to them because they knew from His words that He had conquered the evil one and brought eternal life to them.”**

Only in Jesus can your joy be complete.

It’s a continuous joy through Jesus.

It’s a complete joy from Jesus.

It’s a conquering joy because of Jesus.

III. IT’S A CONQUERING JOY BECAUSE OF JESUS – Hebrews 12:2

Jesus kept His eye beyond the cross. Yes, the cross was the culmination of His purpose on earth in fulfilling the Father's will, but His view was on what came after when He would be seated at the right hand of the Father in glory. He could endure the suffering knowing that it was only temporary. He endured the cross and its gloom as He looked forward to the crown of glory.

The shame of the cross came on Friday, but the joy came on Sunday. The cross was a curse, but the resurrection was the celebration. Jesus made it through Friday because He knew Sunday was coming.

So friends, regardless of the kind of Friday you are going through, have joy because your resurrection Sunday is coming. When you are going through some hardship that seems overwhelming to you, look to Jesus, fix your eyes on Jesus, take your example from Jesus. This verse tells us He is the author and perfecter of faith. Complete trust in Him brings joy. You can conquer with joy through Jesus. That word look means to trust, to believe that He has a plan in the trial. **Verse 3** tells us to keep our eyes on Jesus so that we don't grow weary or faint, so we don't lose our joy.

The Greek word for joy is related to the word grace. In other words, we have joy because of grace. Joy isn't just an attitude, it's an action as we let that joy show by always rejoicing in all things.

Keep in mind that joy is a choice. GotQuestions says "We choose whether to value God's presence, promises, and work in our lives. When we yield to the Spirit, He opens our eyes to God's grace around us and fills us with joy. Joy is not to be found in a fallen world; it is only fellowship with God that can make our joy complete."

Here's what I think when I consider that the joy Jesus wants to give us is a conquering joy.

A. It's A Conquering Joy That Is Confident

It fully believes and trusts the promises of God. In that you find joy.

B. It's A Conquering Joy That Is Committed

It is fully committed to following Jesus in obedience. In that you find joy.

C. It's A Conquering Joy That Is Courageous

No matter what path the Lord takes you, you courageously follow because He will never take you down a wrong road. In that you find joy.

D. It's A Conquering Joy That Is Content

It is satisfied with God's leading, content to follow Him. In that there is joy.

E. It's A Conquering Joy That Is Celebratory

The fruit of joy developed in us by the Holy Spirit causes us to break out in song even in trials. It is something we especially experience in corporate worship when God's Spirit moves each of us as we unite in song. It's a joy we can't keep to ourselves or can't contain when we are led by and yielded to the Spirit. Joy in Jesus is a time of celebration.

Why does a Jesus focused joy satisfy?

Being the Way, the Truth, and the Life, His path is one of fullness of joy and daily satisfaction. You never have to seek after something you are unsure will ever really satisfy because His way is life. There is no guilt or regret. There is no wonder. You never have to try and please someone else, and neither is it temporary.

Romans 15:13 "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Does your joy rest in the Lord?

Is the joy of Jesus down in your heart to stay?