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“The Joy-Filled Life”

INTRODUCTION: Good Evening, ladies and gentlemen! It is wonderful to see you all here for our services! I’m grateful for the opportunity to once again preach the Word to you, and it’s marvelous that we are slowly and safely moving toward having our services within our building in the near future. It has certainly been a life-changing experience going through this pandemic, but praise be to God that His Gospel has been reaching more people than ever before! To Him be the glory! I am also thankful for our Pastor and Deacons for their leadership through this trying time; if there were any doubts of their love for the church, this pandemic has proven to what lengths our church leaders will take to ensure our safety and well-being. Thank you.

I want you all to think back to some of the happiest times in your lives. I’m sure there are moments we have in common: our wedding days, the birth of our children, being hired at your dream job, receiving that big promotion, and I hope, of course, the day of your salvation. Whatever the moment, each highlight and celebration have a common thread throughout – they spark a sense of joy.

Merriam-Webster defines joy as “*the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires; to experience great pleasure or delight.*” But as believers, joy has a deeper, more spiritual meaning which carries a greater

impact, especially in regards to our relationship with both God and each other. Joy is the topic which we will discuss this evening, and we will be traveling through a variety of passages to understand what the Bible teaches concerning this God-given concept. But before we begin, let us pray...

QUESTION: What Does the Scriptures Teach Us Concerning the Concept of Joy?

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE: The Scriptures Teach...

I. Joy’s Purpose from God

A. Biblical Definitions of the Term

- i. In the Old Testament, the word joy comes from the Hebrew **chedvâh** (*khed-vaw'*), meaning to rejoice or make glad
- ii. In the New Testament, it comes from the Greek word **chara** (*khar-ah'*), which means cheerfulness, gladness, and calm delight
- iii. Other words that are synonymous to joy in the Scriptures include delight, rejoice, praise, and gladness

B. Biblical Significance of the Term

- i. If you do a word study of joy in the Bible, you will find that it surprisingly doesn’t appear that often in our English translations; in the Old Testament, it only appears twice (with one verse translating the original word as gladness), and it appears 59 times in the New Testament.

- ii. But let us take a look at a few of said verses to discover the significance this word actually holds:
- *1st Chronicles 16:27 – “Glory and honour are in his presence; strength and **gladness** (joy) are in his place.”*
 - *Nehemiah 8:10 – “Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the **joy** of the LORD is your strength.”*
 - *Matthew 2:10 – “When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great **joy**.”*
 - *Luke 2:10 – “And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great **joy**, which shall be to all people.”*
 - *John 3:29 – “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth **greatly** because of the bridegroom's voice: this my **joy** therefore is fulfilled.”*
 - *Acts 13:52 – “And the disciples were filled with **joy**, and with the Holy Ghost.”*

- *Galatians 5:22, 23 – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*
- And there are many more verses where those came from! I encourage you, pick up a Strong's Concordance to see where joy is found in the Bible!

- iii. An interesting note of observation is the concept that when joy is used in the Scriptures, it is more often than not associated with God in some form or another. Why is this the case? If I could take an educated guess, I believe it has something to do with the fact that God is the true source of joy in creation; just as God is love, God is also joy.
- iv. And joy is more than an emotion like the dictionary defines it; it is a mentality, a state of mind that helps us keep our focus on the Lord, a gift given to us so that we can find our delight in Him as He delights in us. As the psalmist once wrote:
- v.3 Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*
 - v.4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.*

*v.5 Commit thy way unto the LORD;
trust also in him; and he shall bring it
to pass.*

-- Psalm 37:3-5

II. Joy's Perversion by Sin

- A. Unfortunately, like everything else in creation, our concept of joy was tainted when man fell into sin.
- i. Now, when the word joy is spoken, people often associate it with happiness, which, like all other emotions, is fickle, changing with whatever circumstance we find ourselves.
 - ii. Worse still is the fact that we strive for joy in creation rather than our Creator, to pursue happiness in our material possessions rather than a relationship with the Lord.
 - iii. The Bible has a term for this as well: vanity

*v.10 And whatsoever mine eyes
desired I kept not from them, I
withheld not my heart from any joy;
for my heart rejoiced in all my
labour: and this was my portion of all
my labour.*

*v.11 Then I looked on all the works
that my hands had wrought, and on
the labour that I had laboured to do:
and, behold, all was vanity and*

*vexation of spirit, and there was no
profit under the sun."*

-- Ecclesiastes 2:10,11

- B. The term "vanity" means emptiness, which is exactly what we receive when we strive to pursue anything, joy or otherwise, apart from God.
- i. When preparing for this sermon, my thoughts turned to the tragic life of actor and comedian Robin Williams.
 - ii. Williams, like countless other entertainers, was an expert in bringing laughter to the masses; but behind closed doors, he suffered from depression, a feeling of emptiness and hopelessness that grew so deep he eventually took his own life.
 - iii. Why would a man as talented as him do such a thing? Because his pursuit of the world's perversion of joy left him with nothing.
- C. The world and its pleasures cannot sustain us if we desire to experience joy; true joy can only come from God!

III. Joy Personified through Christ

- A. Jesus reminds us that He is "*the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*" (John 14:6). Because sin created a gap between mankind and God, Christ came to provide the bridge, paying the penalty of our sin by dying on the cross.

- B. The same personification of God's love is also God's joy personified, for Christ also said *"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."* (John 15:11).
- C. In my honest opinion, I believe we as believers too often make Christ out as being some straight-faced Teacher, going hither and yon sharing His Gospel without so much as cracking a smile. But if you will permit me, I would like for us to imagine a more joy-filled Christ, a Savior...
- Whose smile was the first thing seen by the blind,
 - Whose laughter was the first thing heard by the deaf,
 - Whose touch was the first thing felt by the leper,
 - And Whose embrace was the first thing experienced by the possessed.
- D. And for any who may doubt the joy of our Lord, I would like to remind you that children (who are especially attracted to joyful people), when denied to come close to Him, He said *"Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence."* (Matthew 19:14,15)
- E. The only way for an individual to experience true, God-given joy is to first enter into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ, which can only happen when we acknowledge our sinfulness, believe on Him as the Son of God, and confess

His name for the forgiveness of our sins. When you do this, then you will experience a joy unspeakable, and full of glory!

IV. Joy Perfected in Heaven

- A. Although the joy of the Lord is possible here on earth, it will not be without trial and tribulation.
- i. James wrote in his letter, *"My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. (James 1:2,3)*
 - ii. And Christ Himself said *"Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."* (John 15:20)
- B. But this should not be a discouragement for the believer, for the time will come when the trials of this life will be over, and eternity with our Heavenly Father will begin!

v.1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

v.2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

v.3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is

with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

v.4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

v.5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

-- Revelation 21:1-5

Conclusion:

QUESTION: What Does the Scriptures Teach Us Concerning the Concept of Joy?

INCOMPLETE SENTENCE: The Scriptures Teach...

- I. Joy's Purpose from God**
- II. Joy's Perversion by Sin**
- III. Joy Personified through Christ**
- IV. Joy Perfected in Heaven**

APPLICATION:

A few weeks ago, my wife Bethany sent me a video while I was at work. It was short 15 second clip of our soon to be 8-month-old daughter Betty sitting on our bed, laughing at Bethany off screen. I provided a copy of

this clip to our media guys to see if we can play the audio for you...

As I sat in the break room watching this video over and over again, I thought to myself, "Is there anything purer than the laughter of a baby?" With Betty beginning to recognize familiar faces, it is becoming more prevalent she takes delight in seeing us, understanding that her mother and I are here to protect and provide for her, to the which she is comfortable to laugh, smile, and express happiness more openly because she, at least to some degree, feels loved. And of course, we as parents delight in her because she is our baby, and knowing she'll learn to love us brings a certain joy in our hearts as well.

If we as human parents can express our joy and delight in our daughter, our offspring, how much more so does the Heavenly Father express His joy for us as His children? Now the question for us is, Do we find our joy in Him? My prayer tonight is that you answer yes to that question. But perhaps you can't answer because you're not sure if you even have a relationship with God, a relationship which would allow you to call Him your Heavenly Father. Would you like to know how to begin this relationship? As we stated before, the process starts with receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. The steps are simple; you must...

A – ADMIT you are a sinner. God's Word makes it clear that all have sinned.

Romans 3:10 "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:"

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"

B – BELIEVE Jesus died and rose again to pay for your sins. Put your total trust in Jesus as your only hope of salvation. Realize that Jesus paid the price for your sins on the cross.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

C – CONFESS Jesus is Lord of your life. Confess Jesus by your mouth and believe in Jesus with your heart.

Romans 10:9 “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

If you would like to know more about the plan of salvation, then I encourage you to stop and talk to either myself or Bro. Travis as you exit the parking lot this evening; we would be glad to show you through the Scriptures what it means to be saved and to pray with you! Salvation is available to you freely tonight; you simply need to accept it. And once you do, then the joy of the Lord will be available to you as well. In fact, Christ reminds us that, *“Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”*
(Luke 15:10)

Thank you all for joining us for services this evening. Though we are living in unprecedented, and often chaotic times, please remember that our joy can be found through the Lord. Take your delight in Him, even as He delights in you. Be safe on your journey home, and God bless!