

Joy: “In Him Our Hearts Rejoice”
Psalms 33:1-11, 20-22; 1 Peter 1:3-9

Look Back: Last week:

1. We listed the nine characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. (**Galatians 5:22-23**)
2. We discussed four types of love: *Eros* (romantic, passionate); *Philia* (brotherly, friendship, siblings); *Storge* (parental love); and *Agape* (love of mankind, universal, God-like love).
3. We looked at the commandment of God that we love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Also, we are to love our neighbor as ourselves. (**Mark 12:28-34**)

Joy.

Christians often have the reputation of being very serious people, even to the point of gloominess. We speak of sin and judgment, the cross and shed blood. Our awe of God and solemnity in light of the human condition are appropriate. Nevertheless, our lives are supposed to be characterized by joy.

That God approves of his people being joyful is thoroughly attested to in Scripture. The Israelites came before God with joy in religious festivals. David danced with joy before the Lord. The angels proclaimed a message of “great joy” as they announced Jesus’ birth. Jesus lived a life “full of joy through the Holy Spirit” (**Luke 10:21**). God has given us beauty in nature and love in relationships to stimulate our joy as they mirror for us the invisible attributes of God. And even in suffering we can learn to rejoice in God’s grace and presence and in what he will accomplish through it.

Personal Reflection. The Holy Spirit brings joy to every Christian. He fills our hearts with praise and thanksgiving to God. Yet as we look back over the past few weeks, how joyful have we been? How can we experience this refreshing fruit of the Spirit more fully?

In his book, *Priorities in Ministry*, Ernest E. Mosley wrote about two staff members of a church. One struggled with a big job. He kept appealing for more assistance without success. Someone observed: “I wonder what is going on inside of him. He always seems to be preoccupied with problems. The problem will grow larger if he doesn’t learn to smile, because people don’t want to work with a leader who is grumpy all the time.” His failure to enlist support was largely because the people knew their task would be joyless.

Another member of the same church staff had an equally big job that required enlisting volunteer workers. There were always enough people who responded and worked with him in accomplishing the task. Why? Because joy was evident in his life. He had a confidence about himself, who he was, and the resources God had made available to him. He moved about with joy.

The difference in the two persons described was not in their jobs, their colleagues, or their monetary rewards. Differences were much deeper than that. The Spirit was producing the fruit of joy in one person’s life and not in the other. One minister had equated seriousness with somberness and had closed the door to the Holy Spirit’s efforts to produce joy in life.

The Fruit of the Spirit (Fisherman Bible Study); *Fruit of The Spirit* (Life Guide Bible Studies), *Fruit of The Spirit* (Zondervan); *New American Standard Bible*; *Amplified Holy Bible*; *Open Bible KJV*

Joy –(*Chara*, noun) extreme and overwhelming gladness; uncontrollable cheerfulness; calm delight. (*Chairo*-verb) to rejoice, be glad, to exult. (Vines Expository Dictionary; The Hebrew-Greek Key Study Bible, Baker)

There are many kinds of experiences where we find real joy—wedding days, the birth of a child, being pronounced healed from an illness, or even spending time with a loved one. All of these can be experiences of real joy. It has been said that happiness is based on occasions and events, but joy is not limited to “happy occasions.” Many have experienced joy in unfavorable circumstances. Joy is said to be an attitude of rejoicing in spite of the circumstance.

1. Read: Psalm 33:1-11, 20-22

- a) According to this passage of Scripture, the upright are to sing to the Lord in praise. The King James Version of the Bible reads, “... praise is comely (becoming) for the upright.” The Amplified Bible reads, “Praise is becoming and appropriate for those who are upright [in heart—those with moral integrity and godly character]. The New Living Translation reads: Let the godly sing for joy to the Lord; it is fitting for the pure to praise Him.”
- b) Joy and praise are related because one can lead to the other. By definition joy is a feeling of great pleasure, happiness or delight. Praise is the expression of warm approval or admiration or the expression of approval or admiration. *As it relates toward God, praise is to express one’s respect and gratitude toward God, or the expression of respect and gratitude as an act of worship.* Joy, from the inside, is often expressed outwardly by praise—in song, words, music, dance and body gestures. Joy can generate praise and praise can lead to rejoicing.
- c) It is always fitting to praise God. Why? Because He is worthy because of His unchanging character, His goodness, and His mercy. Even when we don’t understand what He is doing, He is still worthy of praise.
- d) The psalmist described several ways of expressing joy in verses 1-3 and 20-21. Joy can be expressed by using musical instruments, by song. Our hearts can even express joy (rejoice) in Him because of our hope and trust in Him.

The Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament use a number of different words to express the joy and rejoicing that are aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. The word *joyfully* in Psalm 33:1 comes from the Hebrew word *rinnah*, which literally means “to creak” and conveys the idea of exuberant expression of joy with particular reference to shouting. Rejoice in Psalm 33:21 comes from *simchah*, which literally means “to brighten.”

- e) Verses 6 and 7 show God as Creator. God can use creation to stimulate joy in the believer. When we pause to look at the vastness of the oceans and mountains and know that God has made them by His word, it can stimulate or bring about joy. Joy in knowing that the same one who spoke things into being wants to have a relationship with us. It may cause one to do like the Psalmist in **Psalm 8:4** to say, “What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visited him?”

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- f) As we look at verses 20-22, we can have a connection between hope and joy. Our hearts can rejoice because we trust in His holy name. We can rejoice because He is our help and shield. Our hope is in Him, and He is the source of our joy.
- g) From this psalm we can see God's faithfulness and the fact that we can depend upon His word. These aspects of God's character deserve our trust. Knowledge of God's faithfulness and the truth of His word can cause us to encourage ourselves and delight ourselves in the Lord. This can allow joy to continue to develop in our souls.

2. Read 1 Peter 1:3-9

- a) Because of the new birth in Christ, we have been born into an inheritance which is imperishable (beyond the reach of change) and undefiled and unchanging that is reserved in heaven. We are also being protected and shielded by the power of God through faith unto salvation.(verses 3-5)
- b) These first—century Christians could still have joy because God was using the persecution to mature them and purify their faith. Peter lets them know that even though now for a season (temporarily) they were in heaviness through various trials, the trying of their faith would be found to the praise and honor and glory at the return of Christ Jesus. James talks about a process in **James 1:2-4**, to those that were scattered because of persecution against the church. (See also **Romans 5:3-5**)
- c) It is critical for us to understand that joy comes from rightly understanding and appreciating theological truth. To be at peace, to stand in grace is to know the exhilaration of forgiveness, acceptance, sufficiency, and assurance that our salvation brings.
- d) God allows Christians to suffer sometimes to purify their faith. It is like the process of purifying gold. It is placed in extreme heat and the impurities come to the top and can be skimmed off. What is left is pure and of more value. (verses 7-9)
- e) The suffering on the outside needs to be peeled away to reveal the quality of perseverance and genuineness that cannot be learned without pressure. Rather than something to be avoided, resented, or denied, the suffering allowed by a loving Father is designed to accomplish the maturing process in the believer. It is in this that we can rejoice. Christians can retain a joyful faith in difficult times by believing God's word and putting it into practice. (**Romans 8:28, Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 27:13-14, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 34:19, Genesis 50:20; Romans 5:3-5**).
- f) Joy in the midst of suffering may not feel or look like a jubilant celebration. There may be moments of hurt and pain. But one definition of joy is a calm delight. Joy in the midst of suffering can often be displayed as a confident hope and perseverance through whatever the situation may be.

Below are some Scripture references to kinds of joy, descriptions of joy, and some ways joy is expressed.

Joy:

Kinds of:	Reference
Foolish	Proverbs 15:21
Temporary	Matt. 13:20
Motherly	Ps. 113:9
Figurative	Is. 52:9
Future	Matt. 25:21,23

Joy:

Described as:	Reference
Everlasting	Is. 51:11
Great	Acts 8:8
Full	1 John 1:4
Abundant	2 Cor. 8:2
Unspeakable	1 Pet. 1:8

Joy:

Expressed by:	Reference
Song	Gen. 31:27
Music Instruments	1 Sam. 18:6
Sounds	1 Chr. 15:16
Praises	2 Chr. 29:30
Shouting	Ezra 3:12,13

Homework: Read **Romans 5:1-8; 12:16-21; Philippians 4:4-9**

Topic: Peace: "The Peace of God...Will Guard Your Hearts"