

Fruit of the Spirit - Joy

There is one thing that almost every person wants in life....happiness. Is there anyone here that does not want to be happy? You want to be unhappy?

Happiness is one of the greatest pursuits in life. It's why some people constantly change jobs, churches, partners, friends, etc. If something doesn't make you happy, it's usually the problem, right? Surely it can't be YOU!

Happiness is not a bad thing. However our view and pursuit of happiness is often wrong because happiness is circumstantial. It's temporary. It's more about how we feel about a certain thing at a certain time.

One of those things that people think are in the bible that certainly are not in the bible is "God wants me to be happy". I mean, it's a nice thought....it probably make you happy....but it's not true.

See, thinking God wants us to be happy causes a false view of God. Do you know what a false view of God is? It's called an idol, when we make a god in an image that pleases us, instead of who He really is.

What God wants for us is to find JOY!

Happiness and joy each come from a different source. Happiness comes from the world around you, whereas joy comes directly from the Spirit of the living God!

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

These 9 things collectively are THE fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit produces this fruit in the lives of every born again follower of Jesus. If that's you, you have all of these. The Spirit of God is the source of them and He produces them in your life!

It's a continual work, just as a fruit tree may sometimes produce more than other times, and as it matures the fruit is larger, fuller, and more noticable. The same goes for you. God is working and the Spirit is producing fruit in your life and will continue to as long as you are connected to Jesus!

This week we are focusing on joy! Joy is the fruit of the Spirit. This means the Holy Spirit produces it, not you. If you have joy, it's because He gave it to you. This is what is going to set joy apart from happiness. (Happiness can be a result of joy)

John 15:11 (NKJV)

“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.

Jesus had just shared about being the true vine, how we must remain in Him to be able to bear fruit, to bring forth good. He follows that up with a couple verses about how God loved Him and He loved us and how keeping His commandments is how we remain in His love.

He spoke those things so that His joy may remain in you and that your joy may be full.

Did He say anything about happiness?

Did He say it would be easy?

Did He say it would be without trouble?

He said if His joy remains in you, your joy will be full. Joy is not based on our circumstances and the world around us.

Jesus is the wellspring of joy and His Spirit is the One that produces that joy in our lives!

Habakkuk 3:17-19 (NKJV)

Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines;

Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food;

Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls—

18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.

19 The Lord God is my strength;

He will make my feet like deer's feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills.

Your circumstances usually dictate if you are happy or unhappy. But knowing Jesus means knowing joy. His presence is joy. Psalm 16:11 says “In Your presence is fullness of joy”

Like Habakkuk, we must realize the joy we have in God and that it's not dependant on what's going on in our lives.

Many of you know that Vicky was in the hospital. She had 2 surgeries on her broken arm. When we went to visit her in the hospital she was normal Vicky.....not letting her circumstances get her down. She praised God and was thankful it wasn't worse. But even better, she still had joy.

She talked about how with having 6-8 weeks off work, she could probably read the whole bible in that time. She could use that time to spend it with Jesus.....she knows the source of her joy.

She told me I could share this story. If you don't know, Chris is a correctional officer. When Vickey fell, Christ was getting ready for work. So he came to pick her up and take her to the hospital. He was there all day, morning to night. People were kind of treating Vickey kind of funny.....nurses, doctors, anyone that came in contact with her.

Finally someone gets a little worked up and says "no one called and told us you were coming!". I don't recall exactly what they said but something like "that's how emergencies work, we didn't think to call ahead."

The issue was that Chris was wearing his uniform and sitting with the patient. They thought Vickey was an inmate getting medical treatment and Chris was the guard that was being paid to sit with her! How hilarious! And despite her circumstances, her joy in the Lord allowed her to laugh and joke about this all day!

Our joy is in knowing Jesus, not in our having a whole or broken arm.

Some of you are dealing with your own broken arm this morning. You know what circumstances are causing you to be unhappy. Can I tell you that joy is not dependant on your broken arm?

There is a God in heaven right now, seated on a throne, and His name is Jesus.

- He came to seek and save that which was lost.
- He came to heal the broken hearted.
- He came to set the captives free.
- He came to destroy the works of the devil.
- And He came so that you can have eternal life which is so much more than heaven after you die but it's knowing Jesus here and now!

In His presence is fullness of joy!!!!

Look at what Jesus told his disciples: He tells them He has to go away and it's for their advantage so the Helper (Holy Spirit) can come.

John 16:20-22 (NKJV)

Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

Jesus tells them that they WILL be sorrowful. Sorrow is an expression that was created by God. Like anger, it's not bad but what you do with it can cause sin.

It's ok to have sorrow, it's the expression of grief, sadness, disappointment. And is usually tied to a loss. We have sorrow when we lose someone we love. And that's ok. God created grieving. It's how you process the sorrow of loss.

But sorrow is meant to be a temporary expression. We don't stay in sorrow. We look to Jesus and move from sorrow to joy.

There is a weed that tries to choke out the fruit of joy. This weed can often be very hard to identify because it tends to be masked in sorrow. It's the weed of **self-pity**....feeling sorry for yourself. Woe is me. Look at what I have been through or what I'm going through.

Self-pity shows up when we think God no longer pities us.

Read 1 Kings, look at the life of Elijah. This is a man who saw God move supernaturally over and over. It didn't rain by his request, he was fed by ravens, oil and flour were multiplied, he raised the dead, God rained down fire from heaven at his request, he outran a chariot on foot when that rain returned!

Then trouble comes.....Jezebel wanted him dead. He fled to the wilderness and what did he do?

1 Kings 19:4 (NKJV)

But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a broom tree. And he prayed that he might die, and said, "It is enough! Now, Lord, take my life, for I am no better than my fathers!"

This is a man that walked in the power of the Spirit in a time where it was not available to all!

It's really easy to have joy when things are going well, when God is doing great things. But then trouble comes....do you still have joy?

Was Elijah finding happiness in success instead of joy in knowing the God who was the power behind it? Only God knows.

Our source of joy must be Jesus Himself not His working or His power. If it's in what Jesus does....you'll end up in self-pity the moment things are not going your way.

In His presence is fullness of joy!!!!

You find true joy when your focus is on who Jesus is instead of what you're not!

Joy is godly optimism even in trying circumstances

There is an artificial fruit that pretends to be joy. It's that fulfillment in what God is doing through you. It's when we are results driven. We see it in Luke 10.

Luke 10:17 (NKJV)

Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."

How awesome...the demons are subject to US in Your name. This is not an ungodly thing. They credited Jesus. It's in Your name....but how cool that they are subject to us. This power brings us great joy. You should have seen it!

Luke 10:18-20 (NKJV)

And He said to them, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. 19 Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. 20 Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."

Don't find joy in the power that the Holy Spirit displays through you, find joy in your relationship with Jesus. Because there will be a time where you ask for God to move in power and in His sovereignty He knows what's best for you or the situation and He may not do as you wish. And if your joy is in what He does through you....you will find yourself back at self-pity.

In self-pity your focus is on you and you won't find joy until your focus is back on Jesus!

In Luke 24 we find the popular account of the two men on the road to Emmaus. They were saddened by the tragic death of Jesus. They were downcast. They certainly were not walking in joy.

Jesus comes up and walked along with them but they did not recognize Him. Jesus reminded them of what the scriptures say and rekindle their hopes in what God is doing.

They get home, Jesus comes in and eats with them, spends some time with them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him, and He vanished from their sight....

Look at how they respond to this:

Luke 24:32-34 (NKJV)

And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" 33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, 34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

These men, full of sorrow, find themselves in the presence of Jesus, and their sorrow is turned to joy. And what do they do? They run back to Jerusalem....the place of their sorrow.

In His presence is fullness of joy!!!!

Jesus didn't say I'll take away your sorrow and give you joy, He said your sorrow will turn into joy when you see Him. And NO ONE can take that joy away from you!

The fruit of the Spirit is joy. The Spirit of the living God produces joy in your life. Joy is an eternal fruit.

Joy is anchored upon a relationship and not the circumstances. It is anchored in an unshakeable, unbreakable relationship with Jesus!

Rejoice in the LordALWAYS!

The Spirit produces joy but YOU must bear it.....YOU bring it forth, choose joy. Identify worldly sorrow and self-pity and uproot it, rip it out, ask God for help. Recognize if your joy is founded in what Jesus does instead of who He is and repent!

for the kingdom of God isrighteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.