

Joy and the Pursuit of Happiness

I was talking with my wife about what I was going to share today and she just said to me... "Talk about Joy"

- Joy or at least "the pursuit of happiness" seems to be something that is important to all of us.
- The Bible talks a lot about Joy
- God is pictured as the source of Joy but depending on what you have been taught
 - o He may not be very joyful
 - What do you picture when you picture God on His throne in heaven?
 - Is He joyful?
 - What do you picture when you think about Jesus?
 - Is he joyful?
- If you think about it joy (or it's little brother happiness) is huge in our lives
 - o We are looking for it every day... but we may not even know what it is...

So What is Joy?

Joy definition: a condition of calm delight, a lightness of being

- It is different from Happiness...

Happiness definition: a pleasurable or satisfying feeling

Joy is a condition of the heart - that favorably affects how we encounter and view all of life

Happiness is a feeling - that is continually affected by the events and conditions that surround us...

AMERICANS FEEL ENTITLED TO HAPPINESS...

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with **certain unalienable Rights**, that among these are: **Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness**.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men...*"

PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

- An unalienable right which has been given to all humans by their Creator.
- U.S. indicates that these are **rights** that **a government must protect**.
 - UNALIENABLE = "unable to be taken away from or given away by the possessor"

No other government in the world includes the "pursuit of happiness" as a **RIGHT** of it's people and a value for the government to protect.

Thomas Jefferson's meaning for happiness actually meant "social well-being and prosperity"

- Shakespeare "all happiness bechance to thee.." (a good-bye wish)
- **It did not mean "A right to do what makes me happy!"**
 - o **This is what Americans truly believe in:**
 - Life – live well
 - Liberty - do what I want
 - Pursuit of happiness - do what makes me happy

THE SOURCE OF JOY

Psa 16:11 (NKJV) You will show me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy**; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

- The source of enduring Joy is the Presence of God
- Living with nothing to lose, nothing to prove and nothing to hide BRINGS JOY

- Living IN THE PRESENCE of God
 - Nothing can accuse or deride in the presence of God
 - We see who we are
 - We discover WHO WE ARE
 - We discover WHAT WE ARE HERE FOR...

STRENGTH & JOY IN HIS PRESENCE

1Ch 16:26-27 (NIV) For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. [27] Splendor and majesty are before him; **strength and joy are in his dwelling place.**

- STRENGTH and JOY are linked to LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD
 - We all know that Joy in life brings strength and purpose to go on

MORE JOY = MORE STRENGTH

Neh 8:10-11 (NIV) Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. **Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.**"

- DO NOT GREIVE?
- The bible states that Sorrow or Greif KILLS JOY
 - But there are times of grieving in the Bible
 - Yes, but there is a promise from the Lord...

JOY IN THE MORNING

Psa 30:5 (NKJV) For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning.

- Joy is not destroyed by sorrow
- Sorrow can cloud joy and cause it to be severely affected if not dealt with

JOY IS NECESSARY FOR STRENGTH & MEANING IN LIFE...

1Ch 16:27 (NKJV) Honor and majesty are before Him; **Strength and gladness are in His place.**

- Gladness = from same word as joy = ("expressions of Joy")
- Strength come from HIS presence – THIS IS THE SOURCE OF STRENGTH!

JOY TAKES ON NEW MEANING IN NEW COVENANT

THE FRUIT OF ABIDING

Gal 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.

- Joy comes from Abiding/ REMAINING ATTACHED to JESUS
- Joh 15:5 (NKJV) "I am the vine, you are the branches. **He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;** for without Me you can do nothing.

ABIDING IN THE VINE

- The difference between happiness and Joy is immense!!

- Joy definition: a condition of calm delight, a lightness of being
- A fruit of the spirit, an enduring positive attitude of the heart (spirit)
 - Not based on conditions surrounding a person
 - Source = "Divine" - fruit of the Spirit, gained in relationship with God & others
 - (Joy="chara" from the same root word as Grace/"Charis")
 - Position = Spirit – felt through emotions
 - Effect: A thermostat for the soul – Directs feelings no matter what is going on

Happiness definition: a pleasurable or satisfying feeling

- Positive feelings - A positive response to events in life or favorable conditions
- Based on the situation surrounding a person
- Source = "Temporal"-Situations of life (changes in an instant with conditions)
- Position = Emotions – does not exist in Spirit but only in emotions
- Effect – A thermometer –“goes up and down” measures positive feelings of situation

Joy is based on freedom!

- **Joy is based on the condition of the human spirit**
 - o Joy lives in the Spirit & shines out
 - The “mind” can agree with or accept accusations against it...
 - Then “emotions” can feel it
 - The “body” can enjoy it..
 - Results in relaxation, lower Blood pressure & longer life..h
- **Joy remains constant no matter what the circumstances**
 - o Maintenance: involves living with Nothing to lose, nothing to prove and nothing to hide
 - Transparency with God and connection with others
 - Shalom = “nothing missing, nothing broken”
 - o The past has no effect on my life (Joy sheds shame)
 - o The future is no problem for me (Joy engenders hope)

TRUSTING IN GOD = Joy

Rom 15:13 (NIV) 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.**

- Joy comes in a lifestyle of trusting God to provide and direct
- Hearing the voice of the Spirit, knowing what to do and where to go = Trusting in Him = Joy

TRUSTING (Believing) IN GOD = Joy

1Pe 1:8-9 (NIV) Though you have not seen him, you love him; **and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,** [9] for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- Trusting in His promises and taking captive the lies of the enemy
 - o

JOY IN TEMPTATION

Jas 1:2-3 (NKJV) My brethren, **count it all joy when you fall into various trials,** [3] knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.

JOY IN PERSECUTION

Mat 5:11-12 (NKJV) "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. [12] **Rejoice and be exceedingly glad,** for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Joh 16:23-24 (NKJV) "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. [24] Until now you have asked nothing in My name. **Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.**

THE DISCIPLES SORROW

AN ILLUSTRATION OF SORROW'S AFFECT ON JOY and STRENGTH

Sorrow is deadly

- Sorrow is a substance just like faith is a substance.
- Faith changes everything but so does sorrow..

Joh 16:16-24 (NKJV) "**A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me, because I go to the Father.**"

- THE DISCIPLES ARE FILLED WITH SORROW... JESUS IS GOING AWAY...

[17] Then some of His disciples said among themselves, "What is this that He says to us, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'; and, 'because I go to the Father'?" [18] They said therefore, "What is this that He says, 'A little while'? We do not know what He is saying."

- They stopped talking to Jesus and began to talk among themselves
- Instead of asking Jesus... they talked with one another

[19] Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, "Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, 'A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me'?" [20] 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.** [23] "And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. [24] Until now you have asked nothing in My name. **Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.**

- Jesus knows that Sorrow affects our hearts & saps our strength
- He wants us to TALK with him about it... "Ask & receive so that your JOY may be full"
 - This is how we get our strength "the Joy of the Lord is our strength!"
 - If we get out of connection with Jesus... We lose our Joy
 - Then we lose our strength and motivation

Luk 22:44-46 (NKJV) And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. [45] When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, **He found them sleeping from sorrow**. [46] Then He said to them, "Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation."

- The disciples did not pray with Jesus when he needed them... Why?
 - o BECAUSE OF SORROW
- We lose out of the strength of being with Jesus when we give into sorrow!
 - o Jesus was strengthened... but the disciples were not
- THEY WERE NOT PREPARED FOR WHAT WAS ABOUT TO HAPPEN
 - o They all ran away!

Our hearts are continually impacted by the things that happened to us

- we become sorrowful and disappointed Time after time.

What is the impact of sorrow?

1. We stop asking God questions.

The disciples stopped asking him questions

2. Instead of talking with Jesus we talk with each other.

Jesus becomes secondhand relationship we do good ideas not what Jesus is doing.

3. We insulate ourselves. We become weak and

- The disciples were sleeping because of sorrow Luke 22:45 they were sleeping because of sorrow not exhaustion.

We need to be sourced by Jesus by who he is so that sorrow does not overtake us.

Godly Sorrow vs. Worldly Sorrow

2Co 7:8-10 (NIV) Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— [9] yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. [10] **Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.**

WHAT SORROWS HAVE YOU ALLOWED TO SEPARATE YOU GOD?

- What Sorrows have caused you to stop talking with God?
 - David was transparent “why have you forsaken me?”
- What Sorrows have caused you to seek answers from others?
 - Are you trying to find out who God is/what he wants from doctrine, theology?
 - Jesus is in the room...
 - He may not answer you the way you want but he will give you joy & strength
- Are you tired because of Sorrow?
 - Poor motivation and little desire for God because of Disappointments