

JOY & PEACE

Wednesday, January 7

Reading: John 15:5-17 / Romans 14:17-19

Romans 14:17 *For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*

The first three fruit (love, joy, and peace) show our relationship with God which then extends to our relationships with others.

Fruit of JOY – What is the difference between joy and happiness? Happiness is more of an outward expression and can be hindered by circumstances and problems. But we can have God’s joy in our hearts despite what is going on around us. This joy grows from the love of Christ in our hearts. At His last supper with His disciples, Jesus said:

“As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete” (John 15:9-11).

The word “complete” means full. It is the picture of filling a cup until it is full and overflowing. This joyful attitude comes from sharing the love and obeying the commands of our Savior. There should never be a “grumpy Christian” who always sees the negative side and complains about it. Paul tells believers to “do everything without grumbling or arguing” because they are God’s light to a warped and crooked generation (Philippians 2:14-16). Paul wrote this while chained as a prisoner in Rome. But instead of grumbling, he saw it as another reason to rejoice (2:18). We should all say with Nehemiah: “The joy of the Lord is my strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Fruit of PEACE – Jesus’ last words to His disciples before His prayer and arrest in the garden were words of peace. He said, “I have told you these things, so that in Me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). Peace is not simply the absence of war. It is the presence of Christ in our hearts despite the turmoil around us. It is an inner calm that results from confidence in our relationship with God. When we accept Christ as Savior, we now have peace WITH God (Romans 5:1) and the peace OF God (Philippians 4:7).

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:15)

One evidence of a lack of God’s peace is WORRY. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that the antidote for worry is to seek God’s kingdom FIRST in your life (Matthew 6:31-34). Worry shows a lack of trust in God’s promises and provision. It robs us of being able to sing with the hymnwriter, “It is well with my soul.”

JOY and PEACE are often spoken of together in the New Testament.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17)

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 (Romans 15:13)

What do these verses tell us about our source of joy and peace?

What do they tell us we need to do to grow joy and peace in our lives?