

2. The Fruit of Joy

Galatians 5:22-25

Intro

We are continuing the message from last week. We talked about the first fruit of the Spirit which is love, agape which means a love that is committed and loyal in giving of yourself to the well-being of the other person.

The second fruit of the Holy Spirit is "JOY". As we talked about last Sunday, all the fruit of the Spirit stems from the first one - love. Our love for God brings us joy in our lives. Love is very foundational and the key to the other fruits of the Spirit.

Smile

How long do you believe that you could smile without stopping? How long could you hold it? A little girl named Lisa Lester, smiled for 10 hours and 5 minutes and without breaking that smile. She set a new world's record.

A smile is outward but Joy is inward. A smile at its best can last a few hours, but Joy is eternal.

As a matter of fact do you know what the shortest verse in the Bible is? You say I know that its "*Jesus wept.*" Jesus wept is the shortest verse in English, but in the Greek New Testament the shortest verse is found in 1 Thess. 5:16 which says "*Rejoice always.*" Rejoice and joy have the same meaning.

Joy

The word translated "joy" (Greek: chara) refers to the joy of God working in and through the believer.

The Bible mentions "joy" or "rejoicing" 330 times. But it only mentions "happiness" 26 times. Happiness depends upon what happens to you. So if all the circumstances are right in your life, then you can be happy. But joy comes from inside.

I want to tell you the difference between Joy and Happiness. You are not happy all the time because happiness depends on what happens. The Bible doesn't tell us to rejoice in circumstances it tells us to rejoice in the Lord.

Happiness comes from external circumstances, but Joy comes from within. Happiness meets surface needs but Joy meets our deepest needs.

Happiness is like a thermometer, it registers conditions.
Joy is like a thermostat, it regulates conditions.

Now happiness many times evaporates in suffering, but Joy frequently intensifies in times of suffering.

JOY is always used to refer to joy that is based on spiritual factors. It is not a slap-happy silliness that is the result of positive circumstances, but the deep-founded joy of God.

1 Peter 1:8 says, "*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.*"

Inexpressible literally means ‘higher than speech.’ Those who live in a deep personal relationship with Christ experience a joy so divine that they cannot communicate it - humanly speaking, because such joy is beyond the reach of words and human expression. It is a transcendent joy!

Spiritual joy transcends circumstances. In John 16:20, Jesus informed His disciples that they would weep and be sorrowful, but that their sorrow would "*be turned into joy.*" He illustrated the overriding power of joy with the example of childbirth: A woman has pain and apprehension in giving birth to a child, but that same incident also brings joy when the child is born (John 16:21).

The greatest example of joy is Jesus. Although Isaiah 53:3 says that Jesus was "*a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.*"

But Hebrews 12:2 says that Christ endured the cross "*who for the joy set before him endured the cross.*" Jesus had a deep joy that it didn't deter Him from paying the penalty for the sins of everyone who ever lived. He never lost the overriding joy in His life while anticipating the cross. He knew the outcome – that he would save many and bring them to God the Father.

And He can offer that kind of satisfying joy to His followers.

In John 15:11 Jesus says, "*I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.*"

Let me say something: trials are meaningless, pointless, and suffering is senseless unless there is some good purpose for them.

God has a goal in mind. God knows what the good purpose is. The first is that suffering is inevitable.

James 1:2, does not say, "*Count it all joy, my brethren, if you face trials of many kinds.*" He says, "*Count it all joy when you face trials of many kinds.*"

What does that mean? It means trials are not optional. Suffering is a normal part of the process that God uses to bring us to glory. We must not ignore the inevitability of that suffering.

Remember the shortest verse in the Greek New Testament, in 1 Thess. 5:16 Paul says, "*Rejoice always.*"

The Apostle Paul recognized the existence of negative human emotions like sorrow and distress. However he also knew believers must transcend their sorrows with a continual focus on true joy; they must be, as he wrote of himself, "*sorrowful yet always rejoicing*" (2 Cor. 6:10).

Such a focus is possible because biblical joy comes from the Holy Spirit, not merely from a superficial emotional response to positive circumstances. Christian joy constantly flows from what the believer continually knows to be true about God and about his eternal, saving relationship to Him – regardless of circumstances.

Supernatural joy is from the Holy Spirit; thus Paul listed it as an aspect of spiritual fruit.

Also I like what Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18,

"Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."

There is our joy! It's focused on the eternal and the eternal is in us and that's why we have this deep joy that is not dependent on circumstances.

The psalmist says, “*You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*” (Psalm 16:11).

You say, “I would like to have that joy. How can I do it?” You don't try to do it on your own because the Holy Spirit produces it. “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy...*” (Gal. 5:22). If you are filled with the Spirit, He will automatically produce it in you.

Romans 14:17 says, “*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*” Thus this deep eternal joy comes from the Spirit of God.

Conclusion

C. S. Lewis said, “*Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.*”

A third-century man by the name of Cyprian was anticipating death, he wrote these last words to a friend: “*It is a bad world, Donatus, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and good people who have learned the great secret of life. They have found a joy and wisdom which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people, Donatus, are Christians. . . and I am one of them.*” (Source: “A Letter of Cyprian to Donatus” *Moments with The Devotional Masters*, Upper Room, 1961).

Let me quote again that profound statement from Cyprian: “*They have found a joy and wisdom which is a thousand times better than any of the pleasures of our sinful life.*” Wow!

Illustration of Robert Kalley

Around 1832 a Scottish doctor by the name of Dr. Robert Kalley was an atheist treating a very poor woman dying of cancer. Her triumphant faith in the midst of so much misery and pain impressed the young doctor more than he cared to admit. She bore her trials of pain and poverty not merely with calmness, but with joy! The room where she lay may have lacked even the barest necessities, but to the doctor when he made his frequent visits, it had an out of this world quality, something which his scientific mind could not explain. The risen Lord was making his presence and his glory a reality to this godly woman who was wasting away in the dreadful disease. Her witness shook the very foundations of Dr. Kalley's unbelief. Could there be a God? ‘*Read the Book*’, she urged him; ‘*it's all in the Book!*’ Could Christ and his claims be true? He began to search the Scriptures diligently in an endeavour to discover the secret of her victory and joy over the ravages of disease, the destitution of poverty and ultimately, of death itself. (Source: *The Wolf of Scotland*, by William B. Forsyth, Evangelical Press, 1988, page 19).

Through her powerful witness Kalley eventually came to faith in Christ and became the first evangelical to take the Gospel to Portuguese soil (Madeira Island) and even to Brazil, in the years 1838 to 1875.

Remember, spiritual joy transcends life's circumstances and situations. Therefore, no event or circumstance in the Christian life, apart from sin, can or should diminish the believer's true joy.