

“What is Biblical Joy?”

“Rejoice always.” (1 Thessalonians 5:16)

James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-9

“Joy, from a biblical perspective, is the willful decision to trust and obey God in the midst of suffering because we know the outcome of the suffering leads to a closeness with, identifying with, fellowship with, and valuing of Christ that could not be experienced otherwise, namely, the process of maturity. It is a feeling of great pleasure and happiness because the worth of Christ was exhibited through our suffering for His sake and glory.”

“And when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 5:40-41). “In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy....And his (Titus) affection for you is even greater, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. I rejoice, because I have complete confidence in you” (2 Corinthians 7:4,16). “....let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

● James 1:2-4

- Count it all joy that God is maturing us. Count it all joy that God is sanctifying us and will glorify us. Count it all joy that we can be close to and enjoy Christ in this life.
 - The means to maturation is trials and suffering. But in Christ, suffering has great purpose, it is not meaningless. The Christian knows....“*(we are) heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him (we rejoice in our future glorification).*” (Romans 8:17)
- Our faith needs to be tested to become more like Christ. We need tests so that we are humbled, become more thankful, are more graceful towards others, and show the power of the gospel in our lives.
 - The gospel says, “I am weak and He is strong.” The gospel says, “I am forgiven, so I freely forgive those who hurt me.” The gospel says, “Life is all about Jesus, not about me.” The gospel says, “He is sufficient for this difficulty, I am not.” The gospel says, “I want people to see Jesus, not me.” *“I have been crucified with Christ (joy). It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (joy). And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God (joy), who loved me and gave Himself for me (joy).” (Galatians 2:20)*
- Steadfastness is a strength that comes from genuinely trusting God. Steadfastness is the ability to serve God despite our circumstances. To love people despite our circumstances. To show self-control despite our circumstances. To do what pleases God despite our circumstances. *“Therefore my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor (suffering) is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)*

“If we value comfort more than Christlikeness, if we value worldly gain more than spiritual gain, then we will never know biblical joy. Suffering will not make us better, it will simply make us bitter if we don’t desire to show the infinite worth of Christ.” (Warren Wiersbe)

(continued →)

● 1 Peter 1:6-9

Worship: So I Will Trust You (Sovereign Grace Music) How Great Thou Art (Various Artists)
Sovereign Over Us (Aaron Keyes) **Closing Song:** What A Friend We Have In Jesus (Various Artists)

Service Times: Sundays: Revelation Class 4/Prayer 4:30/Church 5:30; Tuesdays: (In-Home) Bible Study: Women 6:30/Men 6:30 & 7;
Thursdays: Prayer 6:20/Church 7

- The basis of Christian joy is that God has saved me and I am saved no matter what. I have been saved to show Jesus. *“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession who are zealous for good works.” (Titus 2:11-14)*
- Biblical joy is an act of the will that ultimately results in *“praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ (the 2nd Coming).”* Biblical joy is confidence first and experience second. I’m confident that my salvation is secure. I’m confident that my suffering matters. I’m confident that displaying Jesus Christ in my life is supreme to any other payoff. *“Obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls (joy).”* Testing builds my confidence, *“the tested genuineness of my faith.”*
- Our confidence in God and obedience to God shows my love for God and strengthens my faith leading to biblical joy. This joy is beyond words; it is glorious!
- Final thoughts:
 - Biblical joy is a fruit of the Spirit and therefore can only be experienced by reliance on the Holy Spirit. Joy is found in humility (Galatians 5:22).
 - We should desire to understand salvation in a way that it becomes breathtaking. That we treasure Him above all other things. To search the Scriptures to understand justice, judgment, sin, love, grace, mercy, and patience to see God clearly.
 - All suffering will either lead to growing joy or growing bitterness. Greater faith or greater criticalness. It will lead to Christian unity or it will lead to separation from the saints. It will lead to a stronger faith or a crippling weakness. It will lead to more awe or more blindness. It will lead to a more sincere love for God or a creation of your own god.

“Happiness is a reaction to something great. Joy is the product of Someone great.”

Announcements:

★**DONATIONS:** Throughout the month of July we are collecting donations for Heartbeats. They are in need of: New SUMMER clothing only — size 3 months to 3T; Swim diapers ONLY (they are well stocked on regular diapers); and diaper bags. There is a tote in front of the back table to put your donations in!

★**KINGS ISLAND TRIP:** Christina Strawn is organizing a group trip to Kings Island on Saturday, August 13th. Group Admission tickets are \$42 each (minimum of 15 people). Please contact Christina (740-755-6512) if you would like to go or you have any questions!

★**LADIES:** We are wanting to do a sourdough bread making class together soon. If this is something you are interested in doing, please let Krystal know so that we can get a head count and set an official day and time for this! This will be a great opportunity for fellowship and to have fun together!

★**FELLOWSHIP DINNER:** We are having a Fellowship Dinner TONIGHT immediately following the worship service. EVERYONE is invited to stay to enjoy the dinner and fellowship with us!

★**PNEUMATOLOGY CLASS:** We will be offering a new class on Sundays, starting on August 14th. This class will be a study on the Holy Spirit — who is the Holy Spirit, what is the work of the Holy Spirit, etc. This class will be EVERY Sunday from 4-5pm. If you are interested in participating in this class, there is a sign-up list on the back table!

★**MEMBERS MEETING:** We will be having a short Members Meeting immediately following the worship service on Sunday, August 7th. If you are a church member, please plan on staying for that meeting!