
Sermon Notes

December 12, 2021

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

GOD WITH US The Fullness of Joy John 15:11, 16:24, 17:13

Joy to the World?

- ❖ According to a recent survey, Americans are the unhappiest they've been in 50 years
 - when it comes to joy, how are you doing?
 - “I know of no greater need today than the need for joy. Unexplainable, contagious joy. Outrageous joy.” (Chuck Swindoll)
- ❖ Joy in a nutshell: Christ has come, God is with us
 - God intends for joy to be an outstanding characteristic in the lives of all of His followers at every season
 - the Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)
- ❖ All of our lives are touched by sorrows, griefs, afflictions, losses and pain
 - how do we capture and hold onto joy in the midst of this?
 - Jesus gives us a recipe for joy on the night before His crucifixion

The Joy of Jesus

- ❖ Jesus makes it clear that He wants His followers not just to have joy, but for them to have a **fullness** of joy
 - Jesus is *a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*.
 - but, beyond Jesus' pain, sorrows, afflictions, and humiliation stands a Savior whose life is marked by **JOY**
- ❖ Look to Jesus (Hebrews 12:2-3)
 - a key to joy and a strategy for defeating depression
 - Jesus offers us the very same joy that sustains Him through all He suffers on Calvary
- ❖ Jesus' joy **IN** us is **EVANGELISTIC**
 - do others come away from spending time with me feeling refreshed or drained?
 - does the joy of Jesus' flow through me like the sap that flows through the branches of a tree?

Cultivating Joy

- ❖ The Bible doesn't mislead us into thinking that “joy” just happens
 - to have Jesus' joy, you must be dependent on God
 - at the same time, you are completely responsible for sustaining and improving the conditions in which the fruit of joy develops a deep root and takes hold in you

- ❖ Joy is **NOT** optional (1 Thes 5:16, Phil 4:4)
 - God intends for every single one of His children to exhibit the fruit of joy
 - true Christian joy is both a privilege **AND** a duty
 - God commands us to have joy not to fuel guilt but because He knows/wants what's best for us
 - you need supernatural help if you're going to get on track with supernatural joy
- ❖ Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what's blocking joy in your life
 - sin, sinful attitudes? (Psalms 51:12, 32:3-4)
 - not taking time to enjoy your relationship with God?
 - putting confidence in the wrong place?
 - any source of confidence other than the grace of God poured out upon us in Jesus is a roadblock to having Jesus' joy in our lives
 - this is not the power of positive thinking
 - don't put confidence in yourself and don't put confidence in what you do either (Luke 10:17-20)

- ❖ How to cultivate a joyful and joy-filled spirit
 - remind yourself that joy is a gift that comes from outside of ourselves
 - let the Holy Spirit speak to you through His Word
 - confess and forsake sin (1 John 1:9)
 - develop a long-range view of life
 - learn how to give thanks in all circumstances
- ❖ God is pleased when you let His joy flow into and out through your life! (Romans 14:17-18)

<h3>Personal Application</h3>

1. On a scale of 0 to 5, how joyful are you? Why is that?
2. Is your connection with Jesus the source of joy in your life? How do you know this to be so?
3. What roadblocks are currently undermining your ability to experience the joy of Jesus and share that joy with others? Sin? Misplaced confidence? Discipline from the Lord? Trials?
4. What building blocks do you most need to make use of to increase joy in your life? Digging more deeply into the Word? Confession and forsaking sin? Keeping a long-range view of life? Giving thanks in all circumstances?