

JOY IN THE LORD!



The Joy of the Lord!

Introduction:

- I. You have taken those two minute surveys before!
 - A. This morning I want to begin with doing a brief survey.
 - B. Do not worry the answers that you give in this survey will remain strictly with you!
- II. It is the holiday season and many speak of this time of the year as: “The Season to be Jolly!” So this survey is one relates to being joyful!



- A. Which one of these Words would you associate with “Friendship?”

Dread
Burden
Responsibility
Encouragement
Joy



- B. Which word best describes to you, falling in love?

Dread
Burden
Responsibility
Encouragement
Joy



- C. Which word do you associate with having a successful marriage?

Dread
Burden
Responsibility
Encouragement
Joy



D. Which word best describes you and your family being in good health?

Dread
Burden
Responsibility
Encouragement
Joy



E. Which word would best fit you when you opening your Christmas presents?

Dread
Burden
Responsibility
Encouragement
Joy



F. Which word would best relate to being a Christian?

Dread
Burden
Responsibility
Encouragement
Joy



III. I hope that each of these questions would be answered by you with the last word in the list, joy!

A. Friendships, Love, Marriage, Good Health all these things ought and do bring joy into our lives!

B. Yet joy in every aspect of our lives is greatly enriched, it is confirmed and secured in our relationship with Christ.

C. Being a Christian in and of itself brings great joy, however it also stabilizes joy in every aspect of our life!

1. In our relationships with others, whether family or friends, in good health or going through sickness and disease, in dealing with the holidays; having the security that is provided by the Lord helps us through any situation of life whether good or bad and it brings joy in our hearts.

2. We find joy and overcome many difficulties with joy due to the promises that are given to us in Christ.

II. In our lesson today, I want us to notice in the life of the earlier disciples of Christ how that they were able to find great joy through Christ even though they thought were the saddest of days of their life.

Discussion:

- ▶ I. Let's us begin our discussion at the time when their Leader, the One whom they had given up everything to follow had died!
 - A. The impact upon them was devastating!
 - 1. There were a group of ladies that had been following Christ wherever He traveled.
 - a. As they followed Christ they gave up many conveniences so that everyday life was more difficult, yet they trusted and honored Lord.
 - b. These ladies actually ministered to Jesus while He was traveling and preaching, teaching other about the coming kingdom of God. (Matthew 27:55; Mark 15:40-41)
 - c. These ladies followed Jesus all the way to the cross where they witnessed Him die!
 - ▶ 2. Plus, there were the apostles of Christ, twelve men that gave up their jobs and families to travel with Jesus and they do so every day for three years.
 - a. They were with Jesus day and night unless He sent them away for a special work.
 - b. They went where He went, they slept where He slept, and they helped Him do what He did.
 - 3. So, when they witnessed their Leader being taken away, when they heard that He was going to be executed, when they saw Him on the cross, and when He was buried in the tomb; they felt as anyone would feel when the individual that they had devoted so much to... is gone!
 - a. In their minds, their cause was over! The good days, the exciting days, the days of wonder were over and would never return!
 - b. Their Leader had failed in achieving what they thought He was going to do!
 - c. Therefore they are lost and without a since of direction or purpose!
 - 4. I am always amazed when reading the Bible and how many times Jesus prepared His followers for His death, and His resurrection; however they just never seemed to grasp or understand!
 - 5. So now, after Jesus is gone, they are hiding! They have the belief that the ones who killed Jesus would now be after them and they would also be killed!

- a. I am sure that their fear and confusion caused them to have many different and disturbing emotions and feelings.
- b. They had given their all for the Lord and now He was gone! They would have been lost, in despair, possibly upset and hurt.
- c. Joy would have indeed been far from them.



B. Three days later the ladies that went to His tomb came back with some exciting news!

1. As Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to the tomb of Christ very early in the morning they discovered something amazing.

- a. The tomb of open and Jesus had risen from the grave!
- b. Angels meet them and relate the Lord's resurrection and how they needed to go and tell the other disciples.

Mark 16:6-7

"But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him.

But go, tell His disciples—and Peter—that He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him, as He said to you."

2. Jesus appears to His disciples and I am sure their minds were back on fulfill again what they believed they were going to accomplish.

3. Yet, in fifty days, He was gone again!

- a. Yes, He was resurrected however He relates that He was going to a place where they could not go initially!
- b. Jesus attempted to prepare them of this before His death on the cross!

John 16:5-7

"But now I go away to Him who sent Me, and none of you asks Me, 'Where are You going?

But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."

- c. Jesus in their presence ascended into Heaven and they saw Him no more. (Acts 1:9-11)

4. They must have been on a roller coaster of emotion!

- a. Excitement that they were working on a particular cause together, possibly liberty from an evil empire!
- b. Then complete deflation when the One that was the deliverer is killed!
- c. Elation to hear that their Lord was not dead, He had risen! Therefore, their freedom was still possibly.
- d. To possibly confusion and wonder because they began to recognize that their endeavors was completely different than His!

▶ II. What a fifty day period of time in their lives! Yet, the promise of their Leader made everything come to light and in the midst of their confusion and despair a joy was found that surpassed anything that they would have imagined.

A. These early disciples should have known what the Lord had prepared and was about to begin.

- 1. They had preached that the kingdom was coming, yet God's kingdom was so much more than they could understand!
- 2. Yet, they go to Jerusalem and wait just as their Leader had directed them.

B. And then the Lord's kingdom was revealed!

- 1. On the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles and through the power of Holy Spirit, they came to understand!
 - a. They understood God's intentions! Not to provide freedom from a government's abuse, but rather liberty from the slavery of sin!
 - b. They understood the reason for Jesus' death and resurrection, they understood His real purposes and the meaning of His teachings.
 - c. They understood that forgiven of sin was being offered to everyone that would develop faith and obedience in Christ!
- 2. And they followed the commission of Christ to go into all the world teaching others what Christ had done!

▶ III. And what took place! Christian Joy exploded throughout the World!

A. The first individuals who became Christians were so joyful that the whole city of Jerusalem could see that they were different!

- 1. Every day they would visit in each other's homes, praising God, and being joyful!

Acts 2:46

“So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”

2. And we continue to see that their joy spread throughout Jerusalem.
 - a. Peter and John healed a lame man at the gate of the Temple. (Acts 3:7-9) When he was made well, he immediately began to walk, leaping in the air and praising God! The people that recognized the man were filled with “wonder and amazement.” (Acts 3:10)
 - b. When the Jewish authorities attempted to stop the Apostles and other disciples from spreading the Gospel message by threatening and beating them; these faithful Christians rejoiced because they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ.

Acts 5:40-41

“And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.”



B. Yet, this Christian joy did not just remain in Jerusalem, it continued to spread!

1. There is the story of the Ethiopian eunuch that became a Christian. (Acts 8:26-39)
 - a. This man had been to Jerusalem most likely as a proselyte Jew to worship and as he was traveling home he was reading the Old Testament Scripture in Isaiah about Christ.
 - b. Philip was directed to come to this man by the Holy Spirit and he had the opportunity to teach him about Christ and how that Jesus was the one in whom the prophet Isaiah was referencing.
 - c. After hearing the Message of Christ, this Ethiopian gentleman desired to be obedient to the Lord’s directed and he relates his good confession and is baptized.

Acts 8:39

“Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

2. We see individuals rejoicing as they became Christians and the book of Acts relates another story of Paul and Silas preaching in the city of Philippi. (Acts 16:11-40)
 - a. They teach several individuals the truth about Christ and they become Christians, however in doing such many became angry at Paul and Silas and them thrown into jail.
 - b. Yet, even after being whipped and thrown into this is miserable environment, Paul and Silas sang praises to God. (Acts 16:25)

► IV. True Christian joy exceeds above anything that this earth offers!

- A. When one truly has a heart that seeks first the Lord and His kingdom, then it is completely natural for them to be joyful!
- B. The Apostle Paul relates several characteristics of a converted Christian and one of these is joy because of their hope in Christ!

Romans 12:9-13

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good.
Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;
not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;
rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;
distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”

- C. He also relates that Joy is one of the basic expressions of the fruits of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”

- D. Paul instructs the Christians in Philippi to rejoice.

Philippians 4:4

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”

- E. The Christians in Thessalonica were also directed to have joy!

I Thessalonians 5:16

“Rejoice always,” (evermore)

- F. Peter writes to Christians that were being abused and placed into jail because of their faith in the Lord.

1. And he instructs them to rejoice because their faith was being refined!

I Peter 1:6-8

"In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory,"

2. Notice that this inexpressible joy is founded within one's faith and commitment to Christ! Christ is the reason for our rejoicing!!!
3. When we love the Lord and commit ourselves completely to Him then we will find the joy that He offers!

► V. So, now, let us make this practical to us today!

A. Do you have joy in our life! Real happiness and joy that supersedes everything else?

1. When we look to Christ,
When we believe upon His Word and His promises to us,
When we are truly converted to Christ,
When we commit our lives completely to Him, sacrificing our desires and our wishes to allow Him to direct our ways,
When we obey Him completely,
Then we can be sure that our relationship with Him will bring us joy!
2. There are two reasons for such joy!
 - a. We have a purpose for life! To live for the Lord!
 - b. We are forgiven of our sins and as we continue to be faithful that forgiveness continues as well.

I John 1:5-10

"This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- B. There is a difference in being a Christian.
 - 1. The difference is genuine because as Christians our direction in life is different. Our direction in life is looking for something greater than this life and even greater than death.
 - 2. See, our following of Christ affects the way that we conduct our lives, the way we treat others, and every other aspect of our life.
 - 3. And such creates godly joy, that other will see and desire!
 - 4. It produces a joy that this earth cannot destroy!

► Conclusion:

- I. Are you lacking in the joy that the Lord provides for His people.
 - A. Possibly you are a Christian yet your purpose has been misdirected and you need to get back on the correct course of life!
 - 1. Repent! Turn your life around!
 - 2. Humbling yourself and making sure that your life is completely in harmony with the Lord's directives.
 - B. If you are not a Christian and you desire to have the joy that surpasses all understanding!
 - 1. Why not study with one of us! Let us look into the marvelous Word of God and come to understand what His will is for you in this life!
 - 2. If you know the Lord's Will yet for some reason you have waited and waited... putting it off!
 - a. Why? Why are you waiting?
 - b. Come to the Lord in faith, repentance, confessing our allegiance to Christ, and being immersed in water so that your sins will be remitted and you can experience the joy of salvation.
- II. If we can assist you this morning let it be known as we stand and as we sing!

Reference:
<http://www.westarkchurchofchrist.org/chadwell/1998/070598am.htm>