

[1]  
For the Joy of it All  
Luke 2:10

Luke 2:10-11 (NLT)

<sup>10</sup> but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

[2]

**What brings you the most joy?**

Asking this question is very important. It will determine the direction of your life. The thing that brings you the most joy is the thing that you treasure the most. And really, sometimes the things we think will bring us joy, the things that we chase after don’t really give us joy. But, if we can establish the true sources of joy we can change our direction and make sure that those things that bring lasting joy are the things that we pursue. We will always pursue the thing that we think will give us the most joy, but sometimes our thinking gets twisted by other things that pull at us.

We tend to think that we can only be happy when all our problems are solved. The problem is that as soon as one of our problems is taken care of another one comes rushing in to fill that space. Our joy cannot come from a problem free life because that kind of life is only in fairy tales. It does not exist on this earth. So, somehow we need to learn to have joy even in the middle of difficulty.

Last week we noted the inextricable link between joy and peace. If we have peace we will have joy as well. The things that tempt you to lose your peace will also cause you to lose your joy if you let them.

[3]

**What sort of things tempt you to lose your joy?**

I’m going to read several passages of scripture from the New Testament and after I am finished reading them I want you to tell me what the common theme is in them. What brings joy?

[4]

Romans 16:19 (NLT)

<sup>19</sup> But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong.

[5]

2 Corinthians 7:4–7 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup> I have the highest confidence in you, and I take great pride in you. You have greatly encouraged me and made me happy despite all our troubles. <sup>5</sup> When we arrived in Macedonia, there was no rest for us. We faced conflict from every direction, with battles on the outside and fear on the inside. <sup>6</sup> But God, who encourages those who are discouraged, encouraged us by the arrival of Titus.

[6]

<sup>7</sup> His presence was a joy, but so was the news he brought of the encouragement he received from you. When he told us how much you long to see me, and how sorry you are for what happened, and how loyal you are to me, I was filled with joy!

[7]

Philippians 2:1–4 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? <sup>2</sup> Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose. <sup>3</sup> Don’t be selfish; don’t try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Don’t look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.

[8]

Philippians 4:1 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stay true to the Lord. I love you and long to see you, dear friends, for you are my joy and the crown I receive for my work.

[9]

1 Thessalonians 2:19–20 (NLT)

<sup>19</sup> After all, what gives us hope and joy, and what will be our proud reward and crown as we stand before our Lord Jesus when he returns? It is you! <sup>20</sup> Yes, you are our pride and joy.

[10]

1 Thessalonians 3:9 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup> How we thank God for you! Because of you we have great joy as we enter God's presence.

[11]

2 Timothy 1:3–4 (NLT)

<sup>3</sup> Timothy, I thank God for you—the God I serve with a clear conscience, just as my ancestors did. Night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. <sup>4</sup> I long to see you again, for I remember your tears as we parted. And I will be filled with joy when we are together again.

[12]

Philemon 4–7 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup> I always thank my God when I pray for you, Philemon, <sup>5</sup> because I keep hearing about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people. <sup>6</sup> And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. <sup>7</sup> Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people.

[13]

2 John 12 (NLT)

<sup>12</sup> I have much more to say to you, but I don't want to do it with paper and ink. For I hope to visit you soon and talk with you face to face. Then our joy will be complete.

Now, these are just a sampling of texts with this theme. I had to severely limit what I used this morning because of time.

[14]

So, what's the common theme running through these passages? What kinds of things bring joy?

It's all about relationships isn't it. That's why it's so important that we work hard at our relationships, both with God and with people. If we don't have peace in our relationships it is impossible to to have joy.

[15]

Everything in life is about relationships. That's why Jesus said that the two most important commands in the Bible that sum up all the rest are to love God and love people.

We lull ourselves into thinking that we will finally be happy when we get the promotion, or the new car, or the big house, or some more free time, or whatever. But those things are only imitations. They are counterfeits of what will truly satisfy and bring us joy, and that is peace in our relationships, first with God, and then with people.

[16]

John 15:8–17 (NLT)

<sup>8</sup> When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father. <sup>9</sup> "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. <sup>10</sup> When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. <sup>11</sup> I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

[17]

<sup>12</sup> This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. <sup>14</sup> You are my friends if you do what I command. <sup>15</sup> I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me.

[18]

<sup>16</sup> You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. <sup>17</sup> This is my command: Love each other.

And this is only made possible because of the cross of Jesus.

[19]

## Romans 5:1–11 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. <sup>2</sup> Because of our faith, Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory. <sup>3</sup> We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that they help us develop endurance.

[20]

<sup>4</sup> And endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation. <sup>5</sup> And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love. <sup>6</sup> When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. <sup>7</sup> Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good.

[21]

<sup>8</sup> But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. <sup>9</sup> And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. <sup>10</sup> For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. <sup>11</sup> So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.