



PART 5: THE INNER FORTRESS

Sermon Notes

Text: Nehemiah 8

Intro: Joy as a Strength

The joy of the Lord is an inner strength

I. Joy & Holiness Go Hand in Hand

Joy and holiness are paired three times between verses 9-11.

God has called us from sin, but also to something far greater than anything we leave behind.

“Joy is not a requirement of Christian discipleship; it is a consequence. It is not what we have to acquire in order to experience life in Christ; it is what comes to us when we are walking in the way of faith and obedience.” - Eugene Peterson

II. Joy Comes From Knowing God

You can know about someone without knowing them.

2 Corinthians 3:12-17

“The more that you progress in your Christian walk, the more the enemy makes you think it is about what you can do. It is always going to be about the presence of God.” - Matthew Barnett

III. Joy is Our Inner Fortress

The Hebrew word for “strength” can also be translated “refuge”.

Joy is the wall around our hearts

True joy is knowing who your Daddy is. Having an understanding of who God is in your heart of hearts brings joy.

Conclusion:

Brick #5: The joy of the Lord is your strength

Life Group Discussion

Warm up:

1. What things in life bring you joy? What does it feel like when you experience joy? Share your stories with the group.
2. Recap the Sunday sermon. What intrigued you? Perplexed you? What did you learn? What questions remain?

Study & Discussion:

1. Read James 1:2-3. What is James saying about our response to difficulties? What is your response when difficulties come your way? Is James telling us to choose Joy? Compare this to Nehemiah 8:10. What similarities are there? Differences?
2. Eugene Peterson has said; "Joy is not a requirement of Christian discipleship; it is a consequence. It is not what we have to acquire in order to experience life in Christ; it is what comes to us when we are walking in the way of faith and obedience." Do you agree with this statement? What relationship do the joy of the Lord and obedience have? Can you have one without the other?
3. Read Psalm 16:11 and then 2 Corinthians 3:12-17. What is this passage saying about our understanding of God? Our relationship with God? Does it give any clues to why being in God's presence brings "fulness of joy"? How does a heart knowledge of God's character effect our joy?

Application:

1. What situation in your life requires you to lean into God's presence to experience the joy of the Lord? Spend time in prayer for each other, being encouraged by His presence.

Prayer:

1. Pray for the joy of the Lord to fill you and to guard your hearts
2. Other Requests
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