

Session 2 Joy and Unity Under Pressure (Jn. 15:11, 17)

“Let me drink from the river of Your pleasures as I delight in Your beauty” (Ps. 36:8; 37:4)

I. OVERVIEW

- A. The primary theme Jesus speaks to His disciples about in **Jn. 13-17** is the subject of God’s love and glory. Jesus’ main objective is to lead the Church into the revelation of God’s divine love. It is our destiny to experience the glory that He possessed with His Father before the foundations of the earth. Our destiny is to fully engage the fellowship of the Godhead forever.
- B. The primary destiny and inheritance of the Church is to experience deep intimacy with the Trinity. We are called to an experiential union with God (intimacy) and unity with the saints. (Jn. 13:34; 14:11; 15:4-7, 9-10, 12; 17:10-11, 13, 21-23, 26). We interact with the Trinity.
- C. Jesus’ purpose of His instruction in Jn. 13-17 was to equip His followers to walk in victory under the growing global pressure. He taught His disciples that in dialogue with the Godhead, our hearts will be filled with peace and joy to keeping us from falling away under pressure.
- ¹¹***“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you...” (Jn. 15:11)***
- ¹⁷***“These things I command you, that you love one another.” (Jn. 15:17)***
- ¹⁶***“These things I have spoken to you, that you should not...stumble [fall away].” (Jn. 16:1)***
- ³³***“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace...” (Jn. 16:33)***
- ¹³***“... these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled...” (Jn. 17:13)***
- D. Jesus prophesied a coming time of great pressure on the earth and that many will be gripped with negative emotions¹ due to a **disconnect** from Jesus through the lack of prayer (**Mt. 26:41**) and a **disconnect** (**Rom. 11:25**) from the plan and storyline of heaven—the gospel.
- E. The COVID crisis (Spring 2020-Spring 2022) showed emerging signs of deteriorating youthful resilience. In 2020, a larger-than-average amount of young adults (ages 18-24) reported signs of anxiety and depressive disorder (56%). Compared to all adults, young adults are more likely to report substance use (25% vs. 13%) and suicidal thoughts (26% vs. 11%).
- ²³***“For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. ²⁴And they will fall by the edge of the sword ... and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; ²⁶men’s hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth ...” (Lk. 21:23–26)***
- F. Isaiah gives the pastoral answer to the church which is **“waiting” on the Lord**, the experience of entering the Trinitarian conversation. The Spirit calls the Church to her **inheritance** by experiencing God’s love in the context of engaging with the Trinity in fellowship.
- ³¹***“But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint. (Isa 40:31)***

¹ Mike Bickle uses the acronym F.O.L.D for Fear (Lk. 21:26), Offense (Mt. 24:10), Lust (Lk. 21:34) and Deception (Lk. 21:8).

II. THE TEMPORAL JOY REMOVED

- A. Jesus and the prophets describe the Great Tribulation in perilous ways. The sin, its consequences, and judgments are severe in their intensity and comprehensive in their scope.
- ³⁵*“For it will come as a snare on all those who dwell on the face of the whole earth.” (Lk. 21:35)*
- ⁶*Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left [Isa 13:12]. (Isa. 24:6)*
- ¹⁵*So the four angels, who had been prepared for the hour and day and month and year, were released to kill a third of mankind. (Rev. 9:15)*
- B. Isaiah 24:4-13 gives a detailed layout of the scope of God’s global judgments. The shakings are so severe, they affect the normal **rhythms** of domestic and social life (24:7-13) and the **condition** of the environment, which is significantly affected (24:4, 18-20) through droughts, disturbances in the vegetation, and violent quakes, all because of the **sin** of humanity (24:5-6).
- ⁵*The earth is also defiled under its inhabitants, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. ⁶Therefore the curse has devoured the earth, and those who dwell in it are desolate. Therefore, the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men are left. (Isa. 24:5-6)*
- C. Isaiah also highlights the severe emotional and psychological impact God’s judgments will have on humanity. All joy is removed, and anguish, bitterness, and confusion have taken root.
- ⁷*The new wine fails, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh. ⁸The mirth of the tambourine ceases, the noise of the jubilant ends, the joy of the harp ceases. ⁹They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink is bitter to those who drink it. (Isa. 24:7-9)*
- D. Social gatherings and parties no longer satisfy, and alcoholic drinks will lose their pleasure.
- ¹⁰*The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, so that none may go in. ¹¹There is a cry for wine in the streets, all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone. (Isa. 24:10-11)*
- E. There is tremendous confusion, and destruction is such that no one can go into their homes. There will be a cry for alcohol to deaden the pain and anguish, but will not be found or satisfy.
- ¹³*... the land among the people, it shall be like the shaking of an olive tree, like the gleaning of grapes when the vintage is done. (Isa. 24:12-13)*
- F. John 15 gives an in-depth practical road map to secure hearts filled with divine joy. Jesus gave His instruction to equip hearts with joy and to equip the church stay in unity under great pressure.
- ¹¹*“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you...” (Jn. 15:11)*
- ¹⁷*“These things I command you, that you love one another.” (Jn. 15:17)*

III. THE PROMISE OF JOY AND UNITY UNDER GREAT PRESSURE

- A. In John 15, to abide points to the idea of dwelling. Jesus calls us to actively live in the place of spiritual union with the Trinity. So much of this has to do with our thoughts, as they are an indicator of where we live. Abiding is about our thoughts and our internal dialogue.
- B. When we are ourselves more aware of what we are thinking about, we discover that much of our thought life is a conversation either with ourselves or with others; those thoughts are where we live. Abiding is the call to shift our internal dialogue by interacting with the Spirit.
- ³*You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You. (Isa. 26:3)*
- ²*Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (Col. 3:1–3)*
- C. Our way, the way we live and operate, is deeply connected to our thought life. Jesus promised that as we actively participate in the Trinitarian dialogue, the life flow of God will release and a growing sense of Jesus' divine joy and pleasure upon our spirit as God is revealed in us.
- ⁷*For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. (Prov. 23:7)*
- ¹¹*“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” (Jn. 15:11)*
- D. In John 15, Jesus gives two primary reasons for the purpose of His instruction in this chapter. He wants His people filled with His vibrant *life-giving joy* (15:11) and secondly, Jesus wants a church in *deep unity* towards with another and deeply rooted in forgiving love (15:17).
- ⁷*“For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ... ⁸All these are the beginning of sorrows. ⁹“... they will ... kill you, and you will be hated ... (they) will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.” (Mt. 24:7–10)*
- ¹⁷*...that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge ... (Eph. 3:17–19)*
- E. Joy is an “emotional fruit” that comes, independent of circumstances, from our interaction with Jesus. It is the fruit of the Spirit. Peace is a state of being, while joy is the inward experience of well-being and confidence. Joy comes as we connect with the Spirit and He reveals in us the love of God, the purpose of God and His power. The revealing of the knowledge of God (intimacy) is what produces the pleasure of joy in our heart.
- F. There is a time coming in which temporal joy will be removed and there will be a culture of offense and betrayal. The pleasure of joy drives out and protects our heart from dark emotions and empowers us to express the love of God more consistently to those around us. Joy unlocks and empowers the heart to love.