

# Summary

In this sermon, Pastor Chris walks through Romans 14:17, unpacking the three keys to the kingdom of God: righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. He challenges the church to stop seeking the kingdom through religious rituals, external rules, or self-effort, and instead to embrace what God has already freely given. Using the image of a house with three locks, he illustrates that each key (righteousness, peace, and joy) unlocks a different barrier that keeps believers from fully living in what God has prepared for them.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You grateful for this time together. As we open Your Word and reflect on what it means to live as citizens of Your kingdom, we ask that You quiet every distraction and every lie that tells us we are not worthy. Holy Spirit, be our guide today. Open our hearts to receive what You want each of us to take from this time. May we leave not just informed, but truly transformed. In Jesus' name, amen.

## Ice Breaker

What is one thing you genuinely enjoy doing that brings you a sense of peace or happiness, and why does it have that effect on you?

## Key Verses

- Romans 14:17
- Isaiah 64:6
- Romans 3:21-22
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Matthew 6:33
- Philippians 4:6-7
- John 15:4-5
- John 16:7
- Galatians 5:16

- Galatians 5:22-23

## Questions

- The pastor described people who have been 'knocking at the wrong door' by seeking the kingdom through religious rules and rituals. In what ways have you personally been tempted to seek God's approval through performance or religious effort rather than through faith?
- Romans 14:17 says the kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Which of these three do you find most difficult to walk in consistently, and why?
- The sermon described righteousness not as a moral scorecard but as Christ's record credited to our account by faith. How does understanding righteousness as a gift rather than something earned change the way you approach your relationship with God?
- The pastor shared that the world's peace is circumstantial, depending on bank accounts, relationships, and health, while kingdom peace exists in spite of circumstances. Can you share a time when you experienced a peace that did not make logical sense given what you were going through?
- Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV) says to trade anxiety for prayer seasoned with thanksgiving. The pastor said, 'When you trade your anxiety for prayer, God trades your panic for peace.' What practical steps can you take this week to apply that exchange in your own life?
- The sermon drew a distinction between happiness and joy, saying joy is a fruit produced by staying connected to the vine rather than a feeling tied to circumstances. What does it look like practically for you to stay connected to the vine on a daily basis?
- The pastor described the Holy Spirit as the master key that ties righteousness, peace, and joy together. He said we should stop trying to live kingdom life without kingdom power. In what areas of your life are you relying on willpower or self-discipline instead of yielding to the Holy Spirit?
- The closing image was of a house with your name on the deed, already given to you as a gift, but with three locks that require three keys. What is one 'lock' in your life right now that you feel is keeping you from fully walking in what God has already given you?

## Life Application

This week, identify one area of your life where you have been striving in your own strength, whether that is trying to earn God's approval, manage anxiety without prayer, or manufacture joy through circumstances. Write it down, bring it to God in prayer each morning, and intentionally thank Him for one

thing related to that area. Practice trading your anxiety for prayer and watch how God responds with His peace.

## Key Takeaways

- Righteousness is not a moral scorecard or something we earn. It is Christ's record credited to our account the moment we place our faith in Him, and it is the key that opens the door to the kingdom.
- Kingdom peace is not circumstantial like the world's peace. It exists in spite of circumstances because it comes from the Prince of Peace governing the inside of our lives through the Holy Spirit.
- Joy is a fruit produced by staying connected to the vine. It is not the absence of pain but the presence of purpose in the middle of pain, and it is cultivated through abiding in Christ rather than through self-effort.
- The Holy Spirit is not a minor member of the Trinity. He is the master key who ties righteousness, peace, and joy together and empowers believers to live the kingdom life they have already been given.
- Many believers are living in the yard of religion and self-effort when God has already placed their name on the deed of the kingdom. The call is to stop knocking on the door of religion and start walking through the door of the kingdom with the keys God has provided.

## Ending Prayer

Father, we thank You for this time together and for the truth of Your Word. Thank You that You have not asked us to earn our way into Your kingdom but have freely given us the keys through Your Son. We ask that righteousness, peace, and joy would not just be concepts we discussed today but realities we walk in every single day. Holy Spirit, be our master key. Govern our hearts, quiet our anxious thoughts, and produce in us a joy that points everyone around us back to You. May we stop living in the yard and start walking fully in everything You have already given us. In the name of Jesus, amen.