

# JOY — Joy of Mission

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According to the scriptures, sharing our faith is a joyous thing to do. But for many, if not most of us, is it more daunting than joyful?

You're not alone if you believe that evangelism and sharing our faith is not that joyful.

## 1 Peter 1:6

In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.

*The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Pe 1:6.

The type of persecution generated questions like, “What will people think when I share my faith?” Other questions, such as loss of status, loss of friends, loss of community and family are also generated. However, this has been no different at any other time in history.

It has been more intense in some periods compared to others, but in every generation, a baseline level of loss of status and community will happen when sharing our faith.

## Recognizing Fears

It's not uncommon for us in the face of these fears to hide our faith. And we defer evangelism to those who have that gift and privatize our faith, threatening to lose our own faith in the process.

Or alternatively, we'll begin thinking, "I'm not qualified, and need to be a better Christian before I can share my faith," and in the process, we may lose the fire and passion and forget to share our faith. No matter which way we go, we are robbing ourselves of joy.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. **In all this you greatly rejoice**, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

*The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Pe 1:3–9.

## What Do We Already Have?

To those of us **who defer to those who have the gift of evangelism**, we already have received a new birth through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as well as a living hope, and an inheritance that we can't lose out on.

You already have acceptance, permanence, and surety of your status in the family of God. This is more than enough of a foundation to share one's faith.

## **Want to Wait?**

The scriptures confront us with the fact that we will go through suffering, but we can rejoice! We can draw that joy from that assurance that we have been talking about the last five weeks of cultivating joy so that we can endure suffering well.

Even in our suffering, we can still go ahead and share, because the suffering proves the genuineness of our faith, which can also help fuel our joy.

## **Not Qualified?**

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

*The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 1 Jn 1:1–2.

The apostles are simply sharing what they have seen and heard, and about the eternal life they have. And we've also had experiences with Jesus, experiencing his love and

him moving in our lives. This is simply called “being a witness” and we can do that immediately after experiencing what Jesus has done for us.



What have you seen or heard or experienced in Jesus?

Is there anyone else around us that we should tell? That we think should know what we’ve experienced?

We can start by preaching to ourselves what has happened to us; this encourages us and reminds us about the gospel that we’ve heard.

Once we’ve done that, we can preach to others, especially when facing challenges in life.

And the more we repeat this cycle, the more we’ll see that this really is good news.



One way that we overcomplicate things in the Western Church is to think that we need to attend schools or programs for evangelism, when really it starts out by “bearing witness” to the simplicity of the gospel and what we’ve received from Jesus.

It may take some energy to figure out how to articulate this in a way that will be received in this culture, but we live in this culture and we know what people are receptive to. We can practice on ourselves before articulating this good news to our neighbors.

We need to be reminded of what we already have because we are so forgetful.

## The Beauty of the Gospel Itself

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

*The New International Version* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), Lk 2:8–11.

The company of angels that delivered the gospel were celebrating God. And so the angels wanted to validate what the angels said, and when they saw it, they spread the news too. They copied the angels.

Why were they so moved to proclaim this?

Good news doesn't make sense in a vacuum. We've got to know the context.

The original unity between God and humanity was lost, but a wounded warrior, a suffering servant was promised. And this suffering servant was the one proclaimed to be born — great news! This servant was going to repair the relationship between God and humanity.

This is great joy for all the people. Do you want that kind of joy?



Why am I robbing myself of the joy that comes from sharing the gospel?



How can I share it in such a way that gives joy to me and to you?

Afua shared about how she believed she was never qualified. And while it is important to get trained and learned, don't use the lack of training as an excuse to shy away from sharing the gospel.

If you don't know how to answer their questions, it is not bad at all to say, "I don't know."

Afua shared how preaching it to herself first allowed her to have the confidence to share the gospel. Just like learning to ride a bicycle, watching videos on how to do it never replaces getting on the bike itself.

If you never preach it to yourself, you won't be able to share it with others, consequently robbing you of that joy.



Stop believing all those lies, repent for believing them, and replace those lies with sharing our faith. Stop leaving it to others and giving into defeater beliefs so that we stop robbing ourselves of joy.

## Cultivating our Preaching

Let's start somewhere! One way to start is to look through the Biblical Confessions on the ENCS app and start preaching them to yourself. There's something really important when you become your best preacher.



When we cultivate being our own preacher, we give the word of God the power to break us out of ruts and bad patterns of thinking that weigh us down.

### What would it look like for you to cultivate this habit?

Let's not let fear rob us of joy; life can give us circumstances that give us fear that force us into these ruts. But when we remember the joy of the angels, we can look deeper into the gospel to find that joy that will propel us to share our faith.

What do we want Jesus to do in the lives of our friends? The gospel can bring that breakthrough. Hawk shared about how he didn't want to be a Christian because "[He] had done too much; [He] was beyond saving."

But the campus minister that was sharing with him shared, "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—9 not by works, so that no one can boast (Eph 2:8-9)."

And Hawk shared that this verse is what saved his life.

And after subsequent conversations, Hawk was brought into a community of joy, and now wants to share that with others.

What would it look like for you to live out of joy instead of fear, and share a gospel out of joy?