



Joy-Filled Unity

OUR ESSENTIALS: Joy Filled Unity

Romans 15:1-13, 12:16-18; John 17:11-23

Our Essentials are our *Church Values*.

Values are springboards for daily action and filters for decision-making; they distinguish our philosophy of ministry and shape the culture within our church family.

First Baptist Gulfport's Values



Christ-Centered Worship



Joy-Filled Unity



Bible-Dependent Truth



Grace-Fueled Acceptance



Mission-Minded Service



Generational-Focused Equipping

1 We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

Romans 15:1-2

- Unity is fostered where the obligation to put others first is prioritized!

- Putting others first means building them up.

3 For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me." 4 For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

Romans 15:3-4

• **Jesus is our example.**

5 May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, 6 that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:5-6

- Living in harmony leads to unity of worship and mission.

7 Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Romans 15:7

“You are not important to me and we are more important to ourselves than you are to us.”
Eric Alexander

8 For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God’s truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs,

Romans 15:8

• **Jesus came to be a servant.**

- Christians in churches throughout the world are to continue the serving mission of Jesus, seeking and saving the lost.

9 and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.

Romans 15:9

13 May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

Romans 15:13

16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.

Romans 12:16-18

*Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. Now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. “I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. **John 17 (selected verses 11-23)***

John Winthrop's City Upon a Hill, 1630

The year was 1630. The place was the Massachusetts Bay along the Atlantic coast near the place known as Plymouth Rock. On board the ship the Arabella, John Winthrop, the

governor of the Massachusetts Bay Company challenged the Puritan settlers to establish a new kind of Christian community.

We must be knit together in this work as one man, we must entertain each other in brotherly affection, together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberallity, we must delight in each other, rejoice together, mourn together, labo, and suffer together, always having before our eyes our Commission and Community in the work, our Community as members of the same body, so shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, as his own people and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of his wisdom power, goodness and truth then formerly we have been acquainted with, we shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when he shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations: the Lord make it like that of New England: for we must Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.

(Edited for clarity and emphasis by Dr. James M. Stewart)

Life Application Sermon Guide

1. **Read** John 16:24.
2. When was the last time you truly experienced unrestrained joy? What were the circumstances?
3. Think about the last time you had no joy whatsoever. What were the circumstances?
4. **Read** John 16:22.
5. What connection exists between joy and unity? Can you have joy without unity?
6. Do you believe Jesus came to give you life and joy? Does Jesus expect Christians to be unified?
7. **Read** John 17.
8. Do you struggle to be joy-filled? Are you around joy-filled people? What choice do you have?
9. Joy-filled people who are believers are walking unified in the Spirit. Have you experienced the joy that comes from the presence of the Holy Spirit in a unified body of believers?
10. **Read** Romans 12:16-18.
11. What steps could you take to help our church be more unified and joy-filled? Is there someone you could share your desire with and with whom you could be accountable?