

DEEPER

THE DISCIPLINE OF CELEBRATION



OPENING

- Share testimonies of the amazing things that God has done in each of your lives over the past few weeks.

SERMON REVIEW

- When we think of celebration, we tend to imagine birthdays, graduations, football victories, and so on.
- Philippians 4:4 says, "Rejoice in the Lord always." What does biblical celebration do?
- *It honors God.* Celebration focuses our attention back on him! (Ephesians 5:19-20)
- How often do we forget to honor God for that which he's done in our lives? In fact, we steal his honor all too frequently.
- It is a choice that we have to make on a regular basis. Ongoing celebration reminds of God's ongoing goodness.
- The enemy of celebration is comparison.
- *It builds our faith.* Humanity has a chronic short-term memory problem. We constantly forget; but celebration helps us remember.
- Take the story of the Exodus and the desert wanderings as an example. God even had to institute regular festivals to help Israel remember his goodness!
- Celebration is not fake joy, but authentic faith and trust. It looks back in gratitude and looks forward with hope.
- *It inspires others.* "If God can show up in your stress and anxiety, maybe he can show up in mine..."
- Revelation 12:11 says that the saints overcame "by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony."
- Celebration will make your friends and colleagues curious about the joy and liveliness you demonstrate.

DISCUSSION

- Read Philippians 4:4-7 aloud in two separate translations.
- How does the verse above help you understand celebration and its consequences?
- How is thanksgiving a form of celebration? In what ways can you give thanks to God?
- How does celebration work against anxiety and fear?
- Practically speaking, what can you do to actually "rejoice in the Lord always"? What steps could you take to make that a part of everyday life?
- Take a few quiet moments to read Exodus 16:1-16. What impact did the lack of celebration have on the Israelites? How did God respond to this "short-term memory" problem?

- Why did God command the Israelites to celebrate feasts such as the Passover and the Firstfruits? What role did celebration play in their covenant relationship with him?
- What tends to keep you from celebrating the Lord and his goodness? How can you correct those tendencies?

CHALLENGE

- Celebrate! Have a special dinner with your family to commemorate the good things God has done; invite friends over to look back on his faithfulness; etc.
- Journal your gratefulness and thanksgiving. Celebrate the Lord's faithfulness with the written word.

PLAN AHEAD

- We'll discuss the discipline of simplicity next. By way of preparation, consider the different meanings associated with the word "simple" and what simplicity could look like as a spiritual discipline in your own life.