



#3 In the “All Things New” Series

Joy and Peace

Forest Park Church

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As the new year opens we have opened a discussion about New Things, and especially the change God planned to bring into the world through the birth of His Son and the forgiveness that accompanies his death on the cross.

Last week we started examining Pauls advice to the Galation Christians about how to experience the new Life God calls us to have:

Galatians 5:16-26

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Leading a spirit led life is transformational, but with so much confusion over the work of the Holy Spirit how do we know what that looks like?

Knowing the the Galaiton believers might ask the same the Apostle Paul continues in Galatians 5:

Gal 5:22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Last week we took a look at the number one item on the list, LOVE.

As we will continue to see the fruit of the spirit are not optional add on's but are essential components of a spirit led life. The fruits of the Spirit reflect the transformation God is leading in our lives.

1 John 4:20

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.

In the final hours before his arrest, Jesus did his best to prepare his disciples for what was to come.

- Jesus spoke of his death,
- Eluded to his resurrection,
- Said he would again go away,
- Promised the gift of the Holy Spirit.

These passages are full of confusion and grief, but also hope and joy.

Just after Jesus talked about the vine and the Branches. Just ties the idea of Love together with the next item in the fruits of the spirit; Joy!

John 15:9-11

4 *"As the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you. Remain in My love. If you keep My commands you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love.*

11 *"I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.*

5 1. Joy is God's Idea.

If you want people to believe in Jesus, the mark of the authenticity of Christ in your life is joy.

- Lost people are not all that interested in your creed.
- They're not all that interested in your doctrines.
- They're not all that interested in your organizations.
- What they want to know, is it working for you?
- And there's nothing more attractive in winning the lost to the Lord Jesus Christ than the joy of the Lord.

However we all know that it seems there are a thousand things every day just waiting to steal away our Joy.

In John 15 Jesus has brought to a close all he has been teaching his disciples on the last night of his time on earth

- Think of the gravity of this situation
- Christ is giving his disciples the most important teaching he can
- Every word chosen for the most important conversation the world has ever seen

Our verse starts with *“I have spoken these things to you....”*

vs.11 “I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

There are two counterintuitive truths about Joy.

6 A: Joy is a result of a life of obedience, not a life of personal fulfillment.

Notice that there is a sort of ascending or building truth here...

- Disciples Obey
- Disciples Obey Because Jesus Obeyed First
- Disciples Obey and receive Joy as a Result
- Disciples Obey because they love Jesus
- Disciples Love Jesus Because He First Loved Them
- Disciples Are Called to Radical Obedience and Love

So often we think we will find happiness only when we are getting the things we want.

- When we get (our way)
- This happiness is only temporary, soon guilt, jealousy, greed, boredom, and a host of other vices steal any chance at joy we might grasp and we are left empty handed.

7 B: Christ's joy makes our joy complete.

11 "I have spoken these things to you so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

The word, "joy," (simchah) in Hebrew, appears in 89 verses and 22 books of the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, the Greek word, (chara) appears 57 times.

- What is really interesting about these words is that they carry a sense of appreciation with them.
- The happiness that the world longs for is far, far different than the Bible's teaching about joy.
- **So many people live waiting for their circumstances to change so they can experience happiness.**

We all live with the illusion that joy will come someday when conditions change.

- We go to school and think we will be happy when we graduate.
- We are single and are convinced we will be happy when we get married.
- We get married and decide we will be happy someday when we have children.
- We have children and decide we will be happy when they grow up and leave the nest—then they do, and we think we were happier when they were still at home.

Psalm 118:24

*This is the day that the Lord has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it.*

When we consider what God has

- Done for us.
- Provided for us,
- Offered us,
- Entrusted to us, its hard not to live our lives on purpose with Joy.

Hebrews 12:2

Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Grief is unavoidable, but joy and grief are not mutually exclusive.

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C: Joy is an inside Job.

Acts 16:25

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,

It is so easy for us to read passages like this and miss the severity of what happened.

- The two are beaten with rods. Such beatings might vary somewhat in degree, but the overall severity of the passage (e.g., having them cast into the deepest part of the prison and the jailer later having to bathe their wounds) leads to the reasonable conclusion that the beating was also quite severe.

- Beatings like these would often lead to deep bruises and contusions, both external and internal bleeding, broken ribs, and trauma to the kidneys and other internal organs.

After this severe beating, and likely bloody and in severe pain, they are ordered bound by leg shackles and cast into the deepest and darkest part of the prison.

- They didn't deserve to be there.
- They had a right not to be there.
- It would be enough to have the average person in despair, self pity, and perhaps even a semiconscious state.

But these guys were worshiping and the others were listening!

Paul and Silas, despite every external discomfort and tremendous physical pain, have a joy that cannot be taken away. They have a connection to God that cannot be severed.

There is a Greek word, “μακάριοι (makarioi),” which describes a kind of stable happiness or blessed state.

- The Greeks used the verb to refer to the happiness of the gods, unaffected by worldly matters.
- Jesus takes up this verb in the beatitudes
- Blessed (μακάριοι – happy) are the poor in spirit, the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.
- Literally, *“Stably blessed and happy are those who have their treasure in Heaven, rather than this passing and unstable world.”*

John 16:33

I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have trouble. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

2. Peace

Shalom is the Hebrew word for peace.

The ancient Hebrew meaning of shalom was “to make something whole”.

- Not just regarding practical restoration of things that were lost or stolen.
- But with an overall sense of fulness and completeness in mind, body and estate.

Peace is not the absence of conflict, it's tranquility in the middle of it.

- Life happens whether or not we have faith, but it's our choice to step out or remain paralyzed.

In Matthew 14 a story is relayed that illustrates perfectly the Peace that comes when we're with Jesus.

10 Matthew 14:22-33

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, “It is a ghost!” and they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, “Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid.”

28 And Peter answered him, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.” 29 He said, “Come.” So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me.” 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, “O you of little faith, why did you doubt?” 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

11 Things to remember when the waves are building:

1. Peter Did the Impossible with Christ.

Peter is known for being a little headstrong.

- He's quick to speak before he thinks things through.
- And while that got him in trouble from time to time, it also lead him to experience things no one else did.

Simon Peter responds to Jesus' claim with a bold claim. *"Lord, if it's you, tell me to come to you on the water."* (Matthew 14:28)

Jesus responds with a single word, "Come."

With remarkable trust and courage Peter climbs over the side of the boat.

I know we like to criticize Peter for what happens next.

- But stay in this moment for a minute.
- In the middle of strong winds and waves Peter trusts Jesus to step out of the boat.
- That's an incredible display of faith in Jesus. None of the other disciples dared step foot out of the boat.

What a powerful moment of PEACE!

12 **Philippians 4:7**

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

13 **2. Jesus immediately reached out to help.**

As Peter walks on water he starts to notice how powerful the wind and waves are, and he takes his eyes off Jesus.

- He gets distracted by his harrowing circumstances and he sinks.
- Peter's doubt was about to take him out.

His focus distracted his peace is shattered. Matthew records that he was afraid as he began to sink.

I imagine as he gasped for one last breath before he went under he cried out, "LORD SAVE ME!"

Jesus doesn't wait. Matthew 14:31 says that immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

14 3. They both walked back to the boat.

And took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat,

Mark Moore describes the rebuke this way in his book *The Chronological Life Of Christ*:

"Jesus rebuked him for his weak faith even though it was stronger than that of the other disciples who remained in the boat. Jesus used this rebuke to help Peter and the other disciples see that consistent confidence in Himself was absolutely necessary. Peter became both a good example and a bad one."

15 4. The wind didn't stop until they were in the boat.

32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.

And yet none of those incredible events are the climax of the story.

- Matthew 14:33 is the climax of this story.
- It's not the miracles, it's the disciples worship of Jesus.
- This is the first time they have addressed Jesus as the Son of God.

When we remember who Christ is, the more manageable the waves of life become.

If I have Jesus, I have peace.

To experience peace, sometimes I'll have to:

- Pause to allow my mind to catch up to my emotions.
- Pray to allow my heart to be aligned with God's.
- Receive help from others when needed.

1 Conclusion:

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.