

Find True Joy

Westview Church | Pastor Dan Perrel | July 26, 2020

“Joyful mission” is one of our three essentials: gospel growth, generous hospitality, and joyful mission.

For the children and teenagers with us this morning, it may be helpful for you to hear the word “joyful” as two words: *joy* and *filled*. Think of a cup, a cup with the “hot chocolate of joy” so full, so filled, that it is over-flowing the brim and running down the sides—*joy filled*.

Before I say more about being “joy filled,” a brief word about “mission.” Think of this as our 24/7, daily existence—whether at home, at play, at work, at school, or at rest—and whether it is in solitude, in relationship with spouse, family members, neighbors, coworkers, or a stranger at Costco. It is the perpetual movement of our daily activities. In other words, mission is our all-encompassing existence—there is no time in which, as Christians, we are not on mission. There is never a time during which we are not actively engaged in obedience to the calling of Christ our King on our lives.

Now, on a personal level, I find the fact that I am giving an exhortation on “joyful mission” confirmation that our Lord has a sense of humor. I’m doing something that I should probably be the last to do, and what I mean by that is that I confess that joy is not something that those who know me well would immediately attribute to me. By contrast though, neither am I the melancholy character of A.A. Milne and Winnie-the-Pooh fame that goes by the name of Eeyore. But joy, and joyfulness, well, not so much—I struggle.

It is highly likely that the problem I have is with the definition of “joy” running around in my noggin. It’s not framed well in my mind from the Word of God, and that’s a problem, potentially a very big problem. Our failure to follow Christ in Spirit-empowered and Spirit-defined joy sends us on a path of our own design, and that path, tragically, leads to our destruction. When we frame the joy of joyfulness in our earthly conditions, our earthly experiences, then we are off course and missing the fullness of joy as it found in the Word of God.

Recently, while speaking on Psalm 30, David Mathis put joy in its proper biblical context, “When we sink the roots of our joy into the very nature and character of God, our roots of joy go down as deep as possible. Our joy, come what may, is grounded in who God is as the God of joy, who is infinitely happy. There is no greater foundation, no greater source, no greater reason for stability and security and genuine joy, [than] when our joy is hidden in God himself.”

Therefore, we will do well to persistently remind ourselves that there is a difference—a chasm-separating difference—between the view of joy of this world (a circumstantial happiness) and that of Christian joy.

Galatians 5:22-23, that well-known list of the fruits of the Spirit, includes as #2 on the list: joy. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control”

As joy is a *fruit*, an outcome produced by the Spirit of God, it is, according to the apostle Paul, the result of “living by the Spirit,” and “walking by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). And yet, though we know we are exhorted from the life-giving Word of God to walk by the Spirit, we fail. We turn aside to handle our daily existence on our own ingenuity, our own thinking, and our own desires and motivations.

Thus, we turn to a time of confession, a time to speak of our self-directed living to the Lord, and seek his forgiveness.