

Sermon Notes for May 15, 2005

Sermon Series
Experiencing The Fruit Of The Spirit In The Local Church
“Joy”
John 15:5-17

Questions that have confused mankind:

- Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, **which no decent human being would eat?**
- Why is there a **light in the fridge and not in the freezer?**
- If **Jimmy cracks corn** and no one cares, **why is there a song about him?**
- If the professor on Gilligan’s Island **can make a radio out of coconut**, why can’t he **fix a hole in a boat?**
- If **Wile E. Coyote** had enough money to **buy all those Acme supplies**, why didn’t he just **buy dinner?** And why did he keep buying from Acme with their **dismal product performance?**
- Did you ever notice that when you **blow in a dog’s face, he gets mad at you**, but when you take him **on a car ride, he can’t wait to stick his head out the window into the wind?**

Introduction

A. The Attitude Of The TYPICAL CHURCH.

1. In my life of 53 years, I have visited and served in a lot of different churches.
 - a. if I were to use one word to describe these churches, what words would I use?
 1. **seriousness**
 2. **gravity**
 3. **commitment**
 4. **focus**
 - b. the one word that I would **not** generally use would be the word **“joy”**
 1. it is as if some churches feel that a church is no place for levity or laughter
 2. after all, we are dealing with heaven and hell and the eternal matters of life
 - c. well, you will be surprised to know that
 1. in the entire Bible there are **498** entries for the word joy
 2. in the **Old Testament** the word joy meant to **“leap or spin around with pleasure”**
 3. in the **New Testament** the word meant **“gladness, bliss and celebration”**

2. It is almost an unwritten rule that the church “needs” to serious.
 - a. Look at a group of **trappist monks** who live in **Westmael**, near **Antwerp, Belgium**. They have taken vows of **perpetual silence**. They **dress in rough sackcloth**, their **heads shaven** and **beards unkempt**. They **sleep on hard boards** and **eat bread** and **vegetables** and **drink sour milk**. Every day the monks go to the garden to **look into the open grave** that awaits the first monk to die. Someone forgot to tell them about the joy of the Lord!
 - b. **William Barclay** – “A **gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms**, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with **black clothes and long faces**.”
 - c. **Philip Kenneson** – “Too much of the time there is **little joy in our worship**. Although reverence and solemnity in worship have their rightful place, **our gatherings must also have a strongly celebrative and joyful character**. Many of us are more than willing to “shout for joy” when **our favorite athletic team prospers**, but find it difficult to find anything worth shouting about **in the presence of the living God**.”
 - d. We see this exhibited in the life of **Michal, wife of King David** in the Old Testament.

II Samuel 6:16-23 (read)

B. The Attitude Of The GODLY CHURCH.

1. We continue our study in the Fruit of the Spirit as seen in the local church.
 - a. **Galatians 5:22-23** – “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”
 1. these are special spiritual attitudes that are given to us when we accept Christ as our Savior
 2. the Holy Spirit brings with Him these 9 attitudes
 - b. **NOTICE THAT THE SECOND SPIRITUAL ATTITUDE BEHIND THE GREATEST ATTITUDE OF LOVE . . . IS JOY!!!**
2. **I maintain that the truly, Spirit-filled, fruitful Christian will be a joyful person.**
 - a. and it is **NOT** spirituality that makes us so serious . . . **it is actually our carnality, our flesh, our sin**
 - b. we shall see today in our text that joy **MUST BE** the attitude of God’s people

I. The CONFUSION Of Our Joy.

A. Our FOCUS ON SELF.

1. One of the real problems FOR ALL PEOPLE is that we don’t really know where joy comes from.
2. We are convinced that joy is something that we must “find” or “create” ourselves.
3. In some ways, we have believed what our forefathers taught us in the **Declaration of Independence** – “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with **certain inalienable rights**; that among them are life, liberty and the **pursuit of happiness**.”
4. Well, people, how are we doing in our pursuit?

B. The FACTS OF SELF.

1. We spend some **300 billion dollars** a year on **recreation**.
2. **20%** of all adult Americans are using **illegal drugs**.
3. The **suicide rate** for young people has gone up **25%**.
4. The **divorce rate** has risen some **700%** over the last century.
5. From Dr. Meier of the Minirth Meier Clinic - "Minirth and I are convinced that many people do choose happiness **but still do not obtain** it. The reason for this is that even though they choose to be happy, **they seek for inner peace and joy in the wrong places**. They seek for happiness in **materialism** and do not find it. They seek for joy in **sexual prowess** but end up with fleeting pleasures and bitter long-term disappointments. They seek inner fulfillment by **obtaining positions of power in corporations, in government, or even in their own families**, but they remain unfulfilled. I have had **millionaire businessmen** come to my office and tell me they have big houses, yachts, and condominiums in Colorado, nice children, secure corporate positions – **and suicidal tendencies**. They have everything this world has to offer except one thing – **inner peace and joy**. **They come to my office as a last resort, begging me to help them conquer the urge to kill themselves.**"

II. The CAUSE Of Our Joy.

A. The SOURCE Of Our Joy.

John 15:5 - "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

1. We are **NOT** the **source** of our joy.
 - a. **why does Jesus use the picture of a vine in a vineyard?**
 1. a vine is the **source of grapes** that is grown on the branches
 2. a grape will not be produced and harvested **UNLESS IT IS TIED TO THE VINE**
 3. if the branches are cut off of the vine, the grapes will die
 - b. in fact, Jesus calls us the **branches** of that vine
 1. in a Jewish culture, **nothing** could be made out of the branches from a vine
 - a. the branches were too twisted, too gnarly
 - b. no planks or boards could be made
 - c. these branches couldn't even be used in the sacrificial fires at the Temple
 - d. as Jesus said, all that these branches were good for was to be **"thrown into the fire and burned"**
 2. now, Jesus is not saying that branches are totally worthless
 - a. because when a branch is tied to the living vine, it can produce wonderful, life-giving grapes
 - b. however, **WITHOUT THE VINE BRANCHES "BECOME" WORTHLESS**
 - c. **SO, Jesus says, we are about as able to create our own joy – joy without Jesus - as a branch is able to create fruit without a vine**
 1. that's why the pursuit of happiness will always be a **"pursuit"** without Jesus
 2. it is **NOT** in our ability to make ourselves happy

2. **He IS the source** of our joy.
 - a. NOTICE what Jesus clearly says in verse 5: “I am the vine and you are the branches.”
 1. **FACT – He is the vine.**
 - a. the provider
 - b. the source
 - c. the energy pack
 - d. the battery
 - e. the electricity
 2. **FACT – We are the branches.**
 - a. **we have no spiritual power WITHOUT Him**
 - b. but . . . as long as we are tied to Him, we have all the spiritual power that we need
 - c. In **Hampton Court near London**, there is a grapevine which is about **1,000 years old**. This grapevine has one root which is at least two feet thick, and some of the branches are **200 feet long**. Despite its age the vine produces **several tons of grapes each year**. Although some of the smaller branches are **200 feet from the main stem, they still bear the sweet and delicious fruit because they are connected to the vine**. Life flows from the single root and throughout the vine bringing nourishment and strength to each of the branches.
 - d. at his conversion, preacher **Charles G. Finney** said this: “The Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that **seemed to go through me, body and soul**. I could feel the impression like a **wave of electricity** going through and through me. Indeed, it seemed to come in waves and waves of **liquid love** . . . like the very breath of God . . . **it seemed to fan me like immense wings.**”

B. The STEADINESS Of Our Joy.

1. The **inconsistency** of our joy.
 - a. **DESPITE** the fact that most, if not all Christians, know that only Jesus can bring them joy, most Christians’ joy is still very, very inconsistent
 - b. and we seem to be confused as to why our joy can be so fleeting
2. The **consistency** of our joy.
 - a. inasmuch as Jesus tells us that He is the vine and we are the branches and that we must be tied to that vine . . .
 1. being connected to the vine does not automatically mean that “the sap” is flowing from the vine
 2. notice the **“if”** word in verse 5 - "I am the vine; you are the branches. **If** a man remains (or abides) in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”
 - b. in order to be fully connected to the vine, we must “abide”
 1. Greek
 - a. to continue, remain, tarry

- b. not to depart
 - 2. the meaning of the word abide is
 - a. to stay
 - b. to stay consistently, regularly, WITHOUT A BREAK
 - 3. **THIS TRUTH IS NOT THAT COMPLICATED!**
 - a. we either abide in Christ and have joy
 - b. or we don't abide in Christ and don't have joy
- c. **ARE YOU ABIDING?**
 - 1. verses
 - a. **Joshua 1:8** – “Do not let this Book of the Law **depart** from your mouth; **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. **Then you will be prosperous and successful.**”
 - b. **Psalms 1:1-2** – “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his **delight** is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he **meditates** day and night.”
 - c. **Colossians 3:16** – “Let the word of Christ **dwell** in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”
 - 2. **how are you doing** with abiding with Christ?
 - a. **do you abide with Christ each and every day?**
 - 1. personal devotional life
 - 2. a time of prayer and praise
 - 3. **THIS IS WHAT JESUS MEANS BY ABIDING**
 - a. so . . . if you are not abiding – no joy
 - b. abiding – brings joy
 - b. illustration:
 - 1. **Pastor Ken Collins** – “Do you have a **plan** for **losing weight**? Do you have a **plan** for **regular exercise**? Do you have a **plan** for **getting a raise**? Do you have a **plan** for your **retirement**? Do you have a **plan** for **buying your next house**? Do you have a **plan** for **paying for your children's education**? Then why don't you have a plan for obeying Jesus' commandments?”
 - 2. **John Piper** – “Several years ago at a North American seminary, **fifty students planning to go overseas in ministry for the summer** were interviewed for their suitability. **Only three - six percent** – could testify to **regular quiet times for reading the Bible and devoting themselves to prayer**. We assume that our pastors and missionaries are the models – we would be shocked I am afraid.”

3. **John Piper** – “Letting the words of Jesus abide in us means **letting Jesus abide in us speaking**. It means that **we welcome Jesus into our lives and make room for Him to live**, not as a silent guest with no opinions or commands, but as an **authoritative guest** whose opinions matter more to us than anyone else’s and whose commands are the **law of our life**. Christ abiding in us is interchangeable with His words abiding in us because Christ never comes without His authoritative views on things. To have Him abiding is **to have all His views abiding in us**. If He abides His views abide. If He abides, His priorities abide. If He abides, his principles abide. If He abides His promises abide. If He abides His commandments abide. In short, if when Christ abides in us, His words abide in us.”

III. The COMPLETENESS Of Our Joy.

A. The FAITHFULNESS Of Our Joy.

Vs. 8 – “**This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit**, showing yourselves to be my disciples.”

1. **Happiness** reveals **man’s goals**.

a. so much of man’s happiness depends on what man wants:

1. money
2. fame
3. family
4. achievement
5. illustration:

- a. having a baby
- b. winning the World Series
- c. winning a national championship

b. man’s happiness usually focuses on man entirely

2. **Joy** focuses on **God’s glory**.

a. when a person abides with Christ daily

1. he wants to serve Christ and not himself
2. he wants to serve others and not himself

b. and . . . when a person is Christlike in thought, word and deed, **GOD IS GLORIFIED!**

1. **we are so confused about what brings God glory**

2. notice what God’s Word says:

a. **Matthew 5:16** – “In the same way, **let your light shine before men**, that they may **see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.**”

b. **I Peter 2:12** – “**Live such good lives among the pagans** that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may **see your good deeds and glorify God** on the day he visits us.”

3. we glorify God WHEN WE BEAR much fruit
 - a. THIS IS NOT THE FRUIT OF SERVING OURSELVES
 - b. NO . . . IT IS THE FRUIT OF BEING CHRISTLIKE IN OUR VERY LIVES
 1. we don't glorify God by seeking our own happiness to the exclusiveness of others
 2. we don't glorify God by being more like ourselves than being like HIM
 3. During a rehearsal of **Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony,"** the musicians under the direction of **Arturo Toscanini** responded to the **maestro's wishes with particular sensitivity.** The musicians were awed by Toscanini's direction and gave him a thunderous ovation at the conclusion of the rehearsal. Toscanini, though, tried desperately to stop them. He waved his arms and shouted at them to be quiet. When the ovation subsided, he said in a broken voice, **"It isn't me, men – it's Beethoven."**

Toscanini recognized his complete dependence on Beethoven. Apart from Beethoven, Toscanini could do nothing. It was Beethoven's brilliance that enabled the conductor to bear fruit, so to speak. He received the music of Beethoven. As Toscanini was dependent on Beethoven to convey music, we are dependent on Christ to bear fruit.

B. The FULLNESS Of Our Joy.

Vs. 11 – "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

1. Notice why Jesus says that He has told His disciples all of this information.
 - a. was it simply to educate them
 - b. no, it dealt with their joy
2. We must notice also, what this word **joy** truly means.
 - a. it is from the Greek word **charis** – from where we get the word grace
 1. one of the definitions of the word grace describes the joy of one who has been **fully reconciled to God and adopted as a son of God**
 2. it is a person who knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is truly and totally a child of God and that will never change
 - b. to make this truth even more sure, the words **"may be complete"** is in the **passive voice**
 1. the passive voice shows that something is **done "to you"**
 2. you did not work for; or earn this grace – it is a gift from God
3. So . . . to receive fullness of joy is by dealing with the following:
 - a. **appropriation**

1. we must appropriate a belief or trust in the finished work of Christ for us on the cross
2. we must realize that God has “graced” us with the death of His Son Jesus on that cross
3. Jesus’ death for the Christian is an historical AND experiential event and you can do nothing more than accept Jesus’ finished work for you on the cross
4. meditate on that and you will be filled with joy

b. abide

1. HOWEVER, despite the wonderful theological and Biblical truth of the cross, Jesus Christ Himself also tells us of the absolute necessity to **abide** with Him
 - a. THAT’S WHY HE SPENT SO MUCH TIME ON TELLING US TO ABIDE
 - b. **we must appropriate AND abide**
2. while our mind is reminded constantly about the facts of the cross, our hearts must be filled with the **literal presence of Christ**
 - a. A.W. Pink called it maintaining a **heart communion with Christ**
 - b. I love this quote from a 17th Century saint – **John Flavel**

“**Ecstasy and delight** are essential to the believer’s soul and they promote sanctification. **We were not meant to live without spiritual exhilaration**, and the Christian who goes for a long time without the experience of **heart-warming** will soon find himself tempted to have his emotions satisfied from earthly things and not, as he ought, from the Spirit of God. The **soul is so constituted** that it craves fulfillment from things outside itself and will embrace **earthly joys for satisfaction** when it cannot reach spiritual ones . . . The believer is in **spiritual danger** if he allows himself to go for **any length of time** without **tasting the love of Christ** and savoring the felt comforts of a Savior’s presence. When Christ ceases to fill the heart with satisfaction, **our souls will go in silent search of other lovers.**”

Conclusion:

1. Folks, **joy is the indicator** that we “**get it.**”
 - a. we are trusting in the work of Christ for us on Calvary – NO MATTER WHAT WE HAVE DONE

William Barclay – “The Christian is the man of joy, the laughing cavalier of Christ. A gloomy Christian is a contradiction in terms, and nothing in all religious history has done Christianity more harm than its connection with black clothes and long faces. It is true that the Christian is a sinner, **but he is a redeemed sinner; and therein lies his joy.**”
 - b. but . . . we are also experiencing the daily presence of Christ in our lives by abiding with Him each and every day

1. in the quiet moments of the day
 2. as we pour over His Word and speak to Him in intimate conversation
- c. so . . . that our **faces** tell the world that truth –

There is a story about 3 **prospectors** who found a rich vein of gold in California during the gold rush days. They realized what a great discovery they had, and decided, ‘We’ve a really good thing going here as long as no one else finds out about it.’ **So they each took a vow to keep it secret.**

Then they headed for town to file their claims and get the equipment necessary to mine the gold. True to their vows, they didn’t say a word to anybody. They filed their claim, bought the equipment and headed back to their mine. But when they did, a crowd of people followed them.

And the reason was because the **expression on their faces had given them away**. Their faces were aglow in anticipation of the wealth that soon would be theirs. People knew that they must have found something very special. So a crowd followed them out of town.”

2. **You show me a church that has no joy and I will show you a church that is not abiding.**

3. From Methodist Bishop Ralph Cushman:

Oh, the sheer joy of it!

Living with Thee,
God of the universe,
Lord of a tree,
Maker of mountains,

Lover of me!

Oh, the sheer joy of it!

Breathing Thy air;
Morning is dawning,
Gone every care,
All the world’s singing
“God’s everywhere!”

Oh, the sheer joy of it!

Walking with Thee,
Out on the hilltop,
Down by the sea,
Life is so wonderful,
Life is so free.

Oh, the sheer joy of it!

Working with God,
Running His errands,
Wanting his nod,
Building His heaven
On common sod.

Oh, the sheer joy of it!

Ever to be
Living in glory,
Living with Thee,
Lord of tomorrow,

Lover of me!”

