

Therefore this Joy of Mine is Complete
The Gospel of John: That You May Believe | John 3:22-36
Southern Hills Baptist Church
October 9, 2016

Introduction: You are a joy-seeker. You are on a pursuit in this life for happiness. That is who you are. That is who we all are. Our hearts pursue joy. We seek joy in all kinds of places...relationships, families, friendships, money, sex, experiences/travel, work, entertainment. You name it and we will try to use it as a vehicle to joy. And we may find joy through those things, if, but only for a while. The joy, the thrill, it always seems to fade over time, doesn't it? Why is happiness so elusive? CS Lewis says this on the issue...

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."
-C.S. Lewis

The fact that our appetite for joy can't be met by any worldly possession, experience, or pleasure should tell us that what we really long for is other-worldly, namely it is God. In our passage tonight, John the Baptist shows us how God brings great and lasting joy, even the face of hardship.

The Setting: A Shifting Ministry (vs. 22-26)

- **The Conflict:** John the Baptist is confronted with the shifting nature of his ministry as Jesus has come on the scene. The crowds that once followed him now followed Jesus. The influence he once wielded was fading. The impact he once had was weakening. The work that once defined him was becoming obsolete.
- **The Temptation:** How would you respond to having something you loved and greatly invested in fade and exit your life?
 - **Discontentment:** Would you struggle to be content with where you are in life?
 - **Jealousy:** Would you jealously desire to have what was someone else's?
- **The Surprising Response of John:** How did John respond to being confronted with his shifting ministry? Bitterness? Discontentment? Sadness? No! Joy! How did John find great joy in situations that would likely leave us discontent and jealous? This is what he outlines in verses 27-36.

Embracing The Sovereignty Of God (vs. 27)

- **Everything is a Gift** – John testifies that everything he has, has been given to him (cf. 1 Cor 4:7). Therefore, nothing is his to cling to with an sense of entitlement as if he had built it or brought it to pass. He couldn't take credit for the crowds, influence, or impact that had once followed him, it was all of God's doing.
- **God is For Us** – Some may hear of God's sovereignty and not be interested in having a being govern all the circumstances of their lives. What we need to know is that God is for us (Rom 8:31-32).
- **God's Agenda:** God is for us, but what is He up to in our lives? Rom 8:28-29 tells us that God is working all things together for good in the lives of His children to refine them into the image of Jesus. This means that God is more concerned with our holiness than our immediate happiness, which further means that will use both blessings and trials to make us like Jesus.
 - **Application:** Regardless of whether we are experiencing blessing or hardship in our life we need to get in sync with God's agenda. We should ask, how is God using this blessing/suffering to grow my faith, to lead me to rely on Him more, to bring Himself glory?

Embracing The Supremacy of Christ (vs. 28-36)

- **Life is about Jesus** – John goes on to share that life isn't about him, it is about Jesus. He never preached for his own crowds, his own influence, his own impact. He preached to prepare the crowds for Jesus, so they might be influence and impacted by Jesus. Life is all about Jesus.
- **Less Me, More Jesus** – This is why John goes on to make the beautiful statement, "He must increase and I must decrease." John wanted the world to have more Jesus and less him. It is only Jesus who can satisfy our longing hearts and bring true, lasting joy.
- **The Case for the Supremacy of Jesus:** John provides 7 reasons why we should embrace Jesus as the Supreme One in verses 28-35.
 - Jesus is Above All – Jesus is in a class all His own
 - Jesus has Heavenly Knowledge – No knowledge escapes Jesus
 - Jesus is the Word of God – Jesus perfectly communicates God
 - Jesus is Beloved by God – Jesus is the great love of God the Father
 - Jesus has All Authority – Jesus rules over all
 - Jesus Holds Eternal Life – Jesus is the only hope for life after life
 - Jesus is the Wrath-Remover – Jesus took the justice our sin demands