

LIFE WITH JOY

Hebrews 12:1-3



SYNOPSIS

We continue on in our advent series with the topic of Joy. Whereas we might be tempted to see joy as a repression of sadness, Biblical Joy is so much more than that. As we look through scripture, we see many people rejoicing (and being commanded to rejoice) in the midst of their suffering. How is this possible? Part of that joy comes from a faith in a greater reality that our destiny is a "with-God" reality where we will see God face to face and experience the fullness of joy that is promised.

In faith, there is an anticipation - an eager waiting for the coming of the day of the LORD. The Bible gives examples of this (such as the labor pains that happen before the birth of the child as well as the eager anticipation for the great marriage feast). But this we know -- in celebration, we recognize it is merely a shadow of the greater reality, and in suffering, we recognize it is a reminder of the greater reality that lies before us.

As our passage tells us, we fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Not only is Jesus the object of our joy, but we are actually the object of his joy. For it is because of us (the joy that was set before Him) that he endured the cross, scorning its shame. May we recognize the good news that not only is He our great joy and reward, but we are His great joy and the treasure that He rejoices over.



2 IMPORTANT POINTS

1

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND JOY

Biblical joy goes beyond our present circumstances. It holds onto a greater reality, a larger framework that envelops our day-to-day circumstances. Because we hold onto this greater reality, we can understand that we are merely a page in the story of God, and the end of the story has been written - we will be His people, and He will be our God. Through this faith, we can wait in eager anticipation of the coming of Jesus, where we will see Him face to face.

2

FIXING OUR EYES ON JESUS

In our passage, Hebrews talks about the fact that Jesus endured the cross because of the joy set before Him. We need to realize that we are that joy! We are His joy and His treasure. He delights in us and loves us. And in response to that, we also declare that He is our joy. At times, it's difficult to admit this reality - but we recalibrate along our journey, where we refocus (and fix our eyes on Jesus). Sometimes it'll take time, sometimes loss, sometimes suffering - but the Holy Spirit mixes all of that together and brings us to a place where we can declare that there is no greater thing than knowing Him.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

What is something that you are anticipating?

2

How do you usually express joy? Do you also wrestle with how joy and grief/sadness can co-exist?

3

As you think about the day of the Lord's return, what does that anticipation feel like for you?

4

Do you see yourself as the object of God's joy? If not, why not? If you do, how does that make you feel?

5

Have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good? How have you experienced it? If you haven't, what do you imagine that it is like?

6

Share what season you are in and how that relates to faith in the greater reality of our true home in God. Spend time as a group asking God to make this reality more true in your spirit.



BIG IDEA

Joy is so much more than just the 'opposite of sadness.' Biblical joy can understand in faith that though life may have its ups and downs, we are living in the greater reality that we are headed towards our eternal home "with God." Because of this faith, we have eager anticipation of His coming where we will see Him face to face. And as we continue on this journey, we take time to refocus, fixing our eyes on Jesus - trusting that not only is He our joy, but we are His joy as well. And though it may be difficult to say that at times, the Holy Spirit brings us to a place where we can declare that there is no greater thing than knowing Him.