

Keynote Title Slide:
Christian Joy
Romans 15:13 ESV
Gal 5:22-24 ESV

- I. Welcome
- II. Announcement – Abide, Next week Meet n Greet
- III. Prayer
- IV. Joy – What is it?
 - a. Worldly definition - Happiness is a fleeting emotion in which one experiences feelings ranging from contentment and satisfaction to bliss and intense pleasure. Joy is a stronger, less common feeling than happiness. Witnessing or achieving selflessness to the point of personal sacrifice frequently triggers this emotion.
 - b. Biblical joy is more than a happy feeling. It's a lasting emotion that comes from the choice to trust that God will fulfill his promises.
 - c. Joy is something we all long for but that often seems difficult to grab hold of. Experiencing joy should be a part of every Christian's life. Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, produced by God's work in us, and it is part of God's will for us.
 - d. We know that even the most mature of God's people experience periods of joylessness. For instance, Job wished he had never been born (Job 3:11). David prayed to be taken away to a place where he would not have to deal with reality (Psalm 55:6–8). Elijah, even after defeating 450 prophets of Baal with fire called down from heaven (1 Kings 18:16–46), fled into the desert and asked God to take his life (1 Kings 19:3–5). If these men struggled, how can we experience consistent joy in the Christian life?
 - e. The first thing is to realize that joy is a gift from God. The root word for *joy* in the Greek is *chara*, which is closely related with the Greek *charis* for “grace.” Joy is both a gift of God as well as a response to the gifts of God. Joy comes when we are aware of God's grace and enjoy His favor.
- V. PIC TREE FROM ROCK AND BALLOON – HELIUM VS ROOT – LIFE SOURCE THAST ISNT EVIDENT TO OTHERS AND DOESN'T ALWAYS MAKE SENSE
- VI. Keynote 1 -Joy is not based on circumstances, but on relationship with Jesus Christ and His indwelling Spirit.
 - a. Keynote 2 - May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. Rom 15:13
 - b. Receive Christ as our personal Savior, the Spirit of God takes residence inside of us.
 - c. The fruit of the Spirit is a supernatural outgrowth of His presence in us.
 - d. Joy is a part of the Spirit.
 - e. Keynote 3 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Galatians 5:22-24

- VII. Joy is not necessarily always based on a feeling
- a. In fact none of the fruit of the Spirit are dependent on our emotions, or completely defined by them. Though our emotions are often involved or stirred by them.
 - i. For example, spiritual love is not always accompanied by mushy feelings. Sometimes it looks more like self-sacrifice and commitment.
 - ii. Self-control is not always accompanied by perfect feelings, but simply feelings that are held in-check and controlled; not allowed to rule.
 - iii. Kindness is often displayed most beautifully when the feelings of kindness wait to show up, but the actions are still performed out of rightness or discipline.
 - iv. Likewise, joy is not always defined by feelings of elation and bubbly happiness. It is something much deeper.
 - v. Some characteristics of JOY
 1. Joy is a supernatural gift
 - a. Charis – a grace given to us by God as He resides in us
 2. Jesus – *“...who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.”* Heb 12:2
 - a. Joy is characterized by Purpose - “for the joy that was set before Him”
 - i. Jesus didn’t look forward to being nailed to a cross, or the pain and humiliation, He looked forward to the known outcome. It was the joy and the purpose of what He was doing.
 - b. Joy is characterized by Choice – “for the joy... endured”
 - i. *“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing”* James 1:2-4
 - c. Keynote 4 - Joy does not mean there is always an absence of sadness or a feeling of exhilaration.
 - i. Joy is deep and mysterious. You can have joy while feeling other emotions simultaneously. It is like that tree coming from the rock. How is it there? How did it survive? The root goes deep into something we don’t even understand.
 - ii. Keynote 5 - Joy is rooted in the knowledge that God loves us unconditionally and has made a way for us to be in unfailing relationship with Him.

1. *"Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer". Rom 12:12*
2. *"Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full". John 16:24*
3. *"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."*
Psalm 16:11

vi. With this in mind, it's evident that one way to experience joy is to focus on God. Rather than dwelling on our difficulties or those things robbing our contentment, we can dwell on God. This is not to say we should deny our discontent or stuff negative emotions. Following the example of many of the psalmists, we can pour out our hearts to God. We can tell Him bluntly all the things that ail us. But then we submit those things to Him, remember who He is, and are happy in Him. Psalms 3, 13, 18, 43, and 103 are good examples.

b. Philippians 4:4–8 gives some guidelines for experiencing joy in the Christian life - (REMEMBER THIS WAS WRITTEN FROM PRISON):

i. *"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵ Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶ do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."* Philippians 4:4-8

ii. Here we see the importance of praising God, remembering that He is near, praying about our worries, and keeping our minds focused on the good things of God.

1. We can experience joy when we intentionally praise.
2. David wrote that the study of God's Word can bring us joy (Psalm 19:8).
3. We experience joy by communing with God through prayer.
4. And we experience joy by keeping our focus on godly things rather than on difficult circumstances or discontentment.

iii. Another way to experience joy in the Christian life is through community.

1. Hebrews 10:19–25 says,
 - a. *"Brothers and sisters . . . let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but*

encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”

- b. We also encourage one another. Christians do not belong to this world. We long to be with God, finally restored to our original design. Life can be lonely and discouraging. Others help remind us of truth, carry our burdens with us, and strengthen us to continue on (Galatians 6:10; Colossians 3:12–14).
- iv. Jesus also gave some instructions regarding joy. In John 15 He talked about abiding in Him and obeying Him. He said,
 - 1. *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now 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. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete”* John 15:9–11.
 - 2. One of the keys to joy is living in obedience to God.
- v. In fact, the Word and experience teaches us that the way to true happiness is thru obedience.
 - 1. Not what the world or our flesh tells us. It says to rebel; do your own thing; nobody puts baby in the corner!
 - 2. But true happiness and fulfilment comes from living in this place of joy.
 - 3. Keynote 6 - You’ve heard that God wants you to be joyful, not necessarily happy. But the Word teaches us that God wants us to be joyful AND happy. But our happiness should come from the things that make Him happy.
 - 4. Keynote 7 -Quote:
 - a. *“It would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”* C.S. Lewis
 - b. Psalm 1 – *“Blessed is the man or woman...”* (Happy and peaceful)
 - c. Beattitudes – Matthew 5:2-11
 - i. *And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. “Blessed are the merciful,*

for they shall receive mercy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons^[a] of God. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

ii. Happy and peaceful...

d. Acts 20:35b

i. "...remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

1. Remember – it is more blessed (happy and peaceful)
2. He desires for us to be blessed
3. Never going to happen in rebellion against Him and His ways
4. He desires for us to embrace all that He is
5. Our joy is made full when we know Him, choose joy, focus on His goodness, read His Word and spend time with Him in prayer.
6. Our joy is made full as we have community with His children, praise Him even during the difficult, and seek to obey Him.
7. True happiness comes from choosing to make Him our everything.

5. The fruit of the Spirit are only truly proven when we are in the midst of hard times

a. 'In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.' 1 Peter 1:6-9

- b. Faith is not real until you need it
- c. Kindness isn't real unless faced with the opportunity and motivation to be unkind, but mercy is chosen instead

- d. Love is most pure when someone loves the unlovely or someone who doesn't deserve it
- e. We find the condition or maturity of our spiritual condition as each of these spiritual fruit are tested by difficulty
- f. Your joy is best tested thru adversity
- g. We can trust in the promises of God
 - i. We belong to Him
 - ii. We have an eternity of relationship with and thru Him
 - iii. He will never leave us or forsake us
 - iv. His grace is sufficient for us in our weakness
 - v. He will strengthen and renew us
 - vi. He loves us unconditionally
 - vii. We will persevere until the end with Him