

Introduction

Biblical virtues that we become as we are transformed in following Jesus....more is always more!

READ: I want to talk about joy tonight...I believe joy is supposed to be something that marks our lives as devoted followers of Christ! I don't think we are supposed to live without joy

Mentioned 145 times in the Bible

Joy is consistently linked with strength/endurance for the journey!

Joy is meant to be full, complete, overflowing...we aren't supposed to have a little bit of joy!

Joy is one of the "perks" of living a life devoted to Jesus....joy that is comes from the eternal source of hope...joy that can't be taken away!

I. What is joy?

Different than happiness/often used interchangeably

Wanting to be happy is not bad...it is human, normal; we all want to be happy

Happiness - positive and pleasant emotions as a result of a sense of well being, contentment and fulfillment

- 1.derived from what is happening around us - happiness - happenings
2. Outward expression....BECAUSE OF (fill in blank, something happening in your life) I AM HAPPY
3. Opposite is sorrow or sadness

Joy = deep rooted, inspired happiness; inner feeling, deep spring that wells up

1. derived from in inner source...feelings of joy can come from things happening but it is not dependent on those things
2. Not "because of"...but IN SPITE OF
Jn 15:11 These things have I spoken to you, that my joy might remain IN YOU and that your joy might be full.

3. Opposite is hopelessness

Kay Warren in *Choose Joy* defines joy as “the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be all right and the determined choice to praise God in all things.”

READ: Joy flows from a reservoir inside of you that has the ability to sustain you even when nothing on the outside gives you a reason to rejoice...comes from an internal source. That is why we can have joy in the midst of trials!!

James 1:2-4 **Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds**, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Acts 2:28 you have made known to me the paths of life; **you will fill me with joy in your presence**

Ps. 126:2 mouths filled with laughter, our tongues (words/language) with joy

BIG THOUGHT:

I have always heard....happiness is something we pursue, joy is something we choose; however, joy just simply being a choice can make me feel a lot of guilt and shame when I am having trouble finding it....just “choose differently” seems trite

READ: Joy is a CHOSEN FOCUS...IT IS A CHOICE TO PUT OUR FOCUS ON THE RIGHT THING!!!

Hebrews 12:2 Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. **For the joy that was set before Him** he endured the cross, scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

READ: Jesus was able to experience joy in the midst of the darkest moments in history because His focus was on the what was set before Him....the guaranteed outcome of what was to come (that sin would be defeated, that death would be conquered, that mankind could finally be in right relationship with their Heavenly Father)

Joy is a point of view, a way of looking at things....NOT absence of sadness or hardships

Joy can be experienced when we set our eyes, set our focus on the guaranteed outcome

Joy is a focus before it is a feeling! (Right feelings follow right actions)

Pain with a purpose....interesting thought

Story of childbirth class....

Pain that doesn't yell "fix me" but yells "pay attention, get ready, stay focused, let's do this" because there is a guaranteed result...a baby will be born!

Jesus paid the ultimate price so that no matter what PAINFUL things we are walking through in our life we can be assured that the outcome is guaranteed....JESUS WINS!

Victory is assured

Sin is defeated

Truth will prevail

There is always hope!

READ: Where is your focus?

Need more joy...check your focus...what outcome are you looking at?

THIS IS THE REALITY...The wrong focus can SUCK THE JOY OUT OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Share that I am preaching to myself tonight....there are some circumstances that are engulfing me with fear, grief, anger....all the ugly things....I have been reminded of Peter walking on the water...

Mt. 14 - tell the story - Jesus has been flexing...showing His power!

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd.

23 After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone,

24 and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.

26 When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

28 "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

29 "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him.

(NLV - but when he saw the strong wind and waves, he was terrified)

(MSG - But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve)

Something change in Peter's focus....when he took his eyes off Jesus...when he began looking around

"When he saw the wind"....it began to suck him under!

Have you had days, seasons where you are "seeing the wind"? Maybe you are living that way right now?

READ

When I fix my focus on what is happening around me my joy is depleted, hard to find; happenings around me become overwhelming; engulf me...even threaten to drown me

When I keep my eyes fixed on Jesus, the winds and waves don't rock me, don't engulf me, don't drown me. Notice that Jesus didn't calm this storm...he was with Peter in it...he held his hand!

Need more joy? Where is your focus?

what does that actually mean...it means setting your thoughts and mind and mental focus on:

what you know to be true from God's Word

what God promises are

how God's kingdom works

WHO GOD IS

My list: when I start "seeing the wind"

He is faithful

He is just (keeps score so I don't have to)

He keeps His promises (He cannot lie)

He is always at work on my behalf (he sees the whole pic)

He wants to be in relationship with me - likes me

He loves me....completely

I don't have to earn His love...already loves me the most

I am forgiven

I am complete through the work of Jesus on the cross for me

I am whole, restored
I have value
I have a contribution to make
I have a kingdom purpose
I have a joy set before me!!!

So Joy is a chosen focus...

Phil 4:8 ...whatever is true, what is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things!

*****what if our “mental loop” was on these things....**

Col 3:2. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Heb. 3:1. Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.

2 Cor 10:4-5. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

*****each one of us has to do the personal work of determining how to keep our mind on things above....**

What are those things that take my focus in the wrong direction?

What are those things that compete with fixing my thoughts on Jesus?

Once I identify those things, I have to do the work of turning down the volume, turning off the channel, re-prioritizing the focus I give it!

Joy (virtue) Builders...pathways that bring personal transformation (guaranteed outcome)

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Scripture | 7. Reaching |
| 2. Worship | 8. Accountability |
| 3. Prayer | 9. Rest |
| 4. Fasting | 10. Generosity |
| 5. Gathering | 11. Stewardship |
| 6. Relationship | 12. Service |

Closing!!

Where is your focus?

**I believe that Jesus followers...you and me....are supposed to be marked with joy!
Everywhere we go, getting to carry joy with us from it's unending, internal
source....
More is more!**

Reference Scriptures:

Joy fills us

Ps. 16:11 - You fill me with joy in your presence

Ps. 94:19. Anxiety was great within me, you brought me joy

Ps. 126:3 Lord has done great things, we are filled with joy

Jn 15:11. So that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete

Jn 17:13 have full measure of my joy

Acts 2:28 you have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence

1 Pet 1:8 filled with inexpressible and glorious joy

Jn 16:24 ask and you will receive, that your joy may be full

Joy gives us strength

Ps. 28:7. Lord is my strength and shield...my heart leaps for joy

Ps. 81:1 Sing for joy to God our strength

Neh 8:10. The joy of the Lord is my strength

Joy is expressed

Ps. 47:1. Shout to God with cries of joy

Ps. 71:23 lips shout for joy

Ps 81:1 Sing for joy to God our strength

Ps. 126:2 mouths filled with laughter, our tongues (words/language) with joy