

Wednesday with the Word

Rev. Ralph Basui Watkins, MFA, DMin, PhD
Pastor / Teacher

This Joy That I Have!!!

Tonight we want to continue to talk about joy. Joy as a source for thanksgiving.

What is joy?

Joy is a state of being, being thankful and content with who God is and what God is doing in your life .

Joy is a state of mind, a made up mind that appreciates where you are in life.

Joy is found in the praising of God for who God is.

Joy is having peace of mind.

Joy is about seeing the good in light of the bad.

Joy is about seeing what God is doing in the spiritual realm, which means we can have joy in the best of times and the worst of times.

Joy is not happiness. Happiness is a feeling. Joy isn't a feeling but rather it is a state of being. I don't feel joyful rather I am joyful.

Questions for Opening Conversation:

What are some joy killers for you?

Who are some people who have the potential to kill your joy?

How do you deal with the things and the people who are joy killers (strategies)?

What gives (brings you joy) you joy?

Who are some of the people who bring you joy?

How do or do you fill your life with the things and people who bring you joy?

Philippians 4:1

1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

In the opening of this chapter Paul calls those he has been called to serve as those whom he loves and longs for. He calls them his joy and his crown. The first key we see here is that a big part of joy is serving people, working for and with people, that you love and like. When we share life and work with people we love and like it brings us joy.

There are people we love but don't like and they can steal our joy. We have to limit our

contact, even with family folk, church folk, who we love but who are joy killers because they aren't likeable.

At the end of this verse Paul instructs them to stand firm and then he goes on to tell them how.

Philippians 4:2-3

2 I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. **3** Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

While Euodia and Syntyche are good workers in the vineyard they are having a disagreement. Here we learn that to have joy we have to deal with disagreements. We have to seek to be of the same mind. This passage also encourages us to do the work of the Lord and to help others do the work of the Lord. They struggled beside Paul and this tells us that while we struggle it is joy that comes out of the struggle. Doing the work for the Lord is not going to be easy but it will bring joy. A key to our joy is our continued commitment to serve the Lord! Don't let folk in the church who do the work but don't enjoy the work steal the joy of the work from you. Some of the busiest folk in the church or the messiest and fussiest persons in the church. They don't enjoy the work even though they do the work. We should do the work with joy and avoid these folk who try to steal our joy because they don't have joy.

Psalms 100:2

Serve the Lord with gladness;

If we don't serve with gladness:

Deuteronomy 28:47-48

47 Because you did not serve the Lord your God joyfully and with gladness of heart for the abundance of everything, **48** therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you, in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and lack of everything. He will put an iron yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.

The attitude in which we do what we do is as important as what we do! If our heart isn't right our service will not be rewarded.

Philippians 4:4-7

4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. **5** Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. **6** Do not worry 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.

To have joy we have to continually re-joyce, this means we intentionally return to being in a state of joy over and over again. We have to be mindful of what brings us joy and

how to access those things. We have to also be mindful of how to deal with the things that interrupt our joy. It is possible to rejoice always if we take care to manage the space around us.

When we rejoice we sense the presence and nearness of the Lord. God is omnipresent, so God is always with us, and when we rejoice we can literally feel the presence of God.

A key part of being able to re-joyce always is to be in prayer always. We are to be praying constantly, in the moment, letting our request be made known to God. To pray with joy is to pray with thanks. To pray with thanks is to thank God in the context of your prayer that God will answer your prayer and you will recognize God's answer. God's answer is not always what we ask God for but God's answer to our prayer is God's will for our life. To pray is bring is in line with God's will and God's way as we recognize the sovereignty of God. We we pray with thanks we will be able to see God's answer to our prayers and accept it even when it is not what we may have wanted or requested. When we pray with thanks we are empowered to submit our will to God's will and God's way. Matter of fact the more we pray the more our prayers are in line with God's will because we are in constant communication with God.

We we re-joyce, pray, thank God, and recognize God's will for our life it brings us peace with the good and what appears not to be good. We can find peace in life and death because in the end we always have life. The peace of God is an individual thing that only you will sense and feel. Don't let anybody steal your peace because they don't understand your peace. The peace of God is when you have been moved by the Spirit of God (the Holy Ghost) to a point of being able to accept God's will even if you don't understand it. To accept God's will doesn't mean I have to understand it or like it but I know it is God's way for me and I know that God will get me through whatever I am going through (and we are always going through something).

Philippians 4:8-9

8 Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. **9** Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

What you meditate on and think about can bring you joy or it can mess your joy up. You have to control your thoughts, you have to focus your thoughts.

2nd Corinthians 10:4-5

4 For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, **5** casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ

How we do this? We do it by doing Philippians 4:8-9
We think on these things...
We praise God for things worthy of being praised.

We keep on doing the good God has created and called us to do. Those of us who are leaders should do what we do in such a way that it exhibits our joy and faithful commitment to our call. What we do should inspire others to do what they are called to do. When we do what we are called to with joy it is contagious. When what you do can't be done joyfully and it doesn't bring you joy you should go to God and ask God if God wants you to continue doing what are doing.

Philippians 4:10-14

10 I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at last you have revived your concern for me; indeed, you were concerned for me, but had no opportunity to show it. **11** Not that I am referring to being in need; for I have learned to be content with whatever I have. **12** I know what it is to have little, and I know what it is to have plenty. In any and all circumstances I have learned the secret of being well-fed and of going hungry, of having plenty and of being in need. **13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me. **14** In any case, it was kind of you to share my distress.

A big part of having joy is being content with what you have. To be content does not mean you are complacent. To be content does not mean you don't desire to have more but rather to be content means I am OK with where I am and what I have right now. I am not going to stress over what I don't have and I am not going to allow the world to through me into the "I want, I gotta have syndrome." I am OK and thankful. I am thankful for where I am in life and I am going to praise God for who have and what I have. I am not going to let consumerism ruin my life or my way of life. It will not steal my joy. We have to learn to be joyful when we have much and the times we don't have much. This is a learned response.

This passage also talks about the joy Paul has because they cared enough to care for him. We get joy and we give joy by caring for others during their times of need. Our joy is linked to how we bring others joy by caring for them.

Finally we can get to verse thirteen without all of the preceding verses. What strengthens us in Christ is doing the things we have talked about all night.