

GOD'S
∞
GIFT
"JOY & VALUE"

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger."









What you see
and what you hear depends a
great deal on
where you are
standing.

~C.S. Lewis,
The Magician's Nephew





² "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing".

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 98:4

“Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises”.

1 Chronicles 15:16

“Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy”.

Psalm 5:11

“But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You”.

Psalm 81:1

“Sing aloud to God our strength; Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob”.

Three aspects of Joy in the first Testament

1. An acknowledgement of the goodness of God.
2. A joy of a personal encounter with God.
3. A joy in anticipation of a future event

Simchat Torah – Rejoicing in the Law



“In Your presence *is* fullness of joy”

Three aspects of Joy in the first Testament

1. An acknowledgement of the goodness of God.
2. A joy of a personal encounter with God.
3. A joy in anticipation of a future event.

⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, **I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.** ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.”

3 lessons in the first Testament where we can learn to experience joy:

1. Remembering what God has done for us.
2. Experiencing joy in the Presence of God – His Spirit with us.
3. Anticipating the promises of God for the future.

SCRIPTURE Luke 15:7, 10

⁷“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance”.

¹⁰“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Notes from Pastor Brian

BCC – God’s gift of Joy and Value - 19 Dec 21 - Handout

Luke 2:8-12

This morning in our God’s gift series we are looking at the wonderful gift of Joy and how that shapes our value system. How we value ourselves, others and our circumstances. Joy’s centre is on God’s activities, His first and second coming.

How do we experience joy?

Life needs balance – we need to be realistic – not denying the truth.

The Bible does not deny that we will all face challenges and that life will not be easy.

James is able to put the whole thing in 2 sentences:

James 1:2-4

Our joy should be a state of being rather than an emotion.

It speaks more of contentment or thankful trust.

We cannot control how we feel about something, however we can control how we think about something and that is exactly what James is saying – when you have trials - think about them this way.

If people have challenges we should encourage them to see God’s purposes in them.

2 extremes:

Blind optimism will not work.

Resigned negativism is destructive.

People today seek fun and happiness. But what the world gives is only short lived and passing.

1. People seek material things, which all fade and lose their attractiveness,
2. Physical pleasure which can lead to addiction craving more experiences,
3. Spiritual things which in the end become strongholds in our lives.

What does the Bible tell us about joy?

It is the proper perspective for a test of faith. The framework is an eternal one,

3 things

1. We will contextualise it in scripture and look at what both the first testament and the New Testament say about it.
2. We will look at it in the life of Jesus.
3. We will look at how it operates in our life?

Context in the first Testament is an outward expression: singing or shouting for joy, dancing, rejoicing, playing instruments.

Psalm 98:4 Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth;
Break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises.

1 Chronicles 15:16

Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.

Psalm 5:11

But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.

Psalm 81:1

Sing aloud to God our strength; Make a joyful shout to the God of Jacob.

1. **Joy is linked with celebration at what God has done. It is an acknowledgement of the goodness of God in all circumstances.**

Harvesttime and weddings are joyful times in the Bible and also are the feasts when the people are commanded to rejoice.

Feast and Festivals were always times of remembering – of acknowledging what God has done.

In all of the feasts (except atonement) the people could look back to times of deliverance, provision, protection, and salvation. Things which the world cannot give, things which are eternal in nature and guaranteed by a covenant God who always keeps His promises.

(Simchat Torah = Rejoicing in the Law). Is at the conclusion of the annual Torah reading at Tabernacles.

Psalm 105:

43 **He brought out His people with joy**, His chosen ones with gladness.

1. **Joy also comes from encounter. An encounter with God.**

Psalm 16:11b - In Your presence *is* fullness of joy;

Psalms 14 to 16 are a progression, a journey.

Psalm 14 is the dismissive fool (The fool has said in his heart there is no God)

Psalm 15 is the searching man – looking for how he can be in God’s tabernacle – what are the requirements? (Who may abide in Your tabernacle?)

Psalm 16 is the worshipper who is joyful, he has entered the tabernacle of God – he has come into God’s Presence and now knows where true joy is – being close to God.

This person has left behind the worries and concerns of the world and has pressed into God’s Presence.

He has journeyed from the world’s foolishness in Psalm 14, through the lesson of repentance and righteousness in Psalm 15 and finally moved into God’s Presence in Psalm 16. The last verse is almost saying – I’ve made it.

1. **And joy is also seen in the anticipation of a future day**

Looking for the Messiah was always the central promise in the OT narrative that brought focus to the people. Even now a central theme for religious Jewish people is the messiah.

The future event that will bring great joy.

Luke 2:8-12

The NT joy here is a word that means great rejoicing

Anticipation brings joy. So the announcement of the angels contained those words 'great joy'.

3 areas from the first Testament where we can learn to experience joy:

1. Remembering what God has done for us.
2. Experiencing joy in the Presence of God – His Spirit with us.
3. Anticipating the promises of God for the future.

For the those who believe in God, our lives, past present and future, are centred on the faithfulness, goodness and promises of God.

It will mean that we are not always looking for something to give us satisfaction. That we will or be striving to earn that extra cash for the next toy we can buy ourselves to fix our world, alleviate our boredom or relieve our stress.

We will face challenges?

But it is about being honest and being able to say that life is not good sometimes.

Principle – God will provide what we need to get through whatever challenges we face. And He will give us joy as our companion.

And the journey matters as much as the destination.

Seek God in the journey: **Psalm 27:8**

When You said, "Seek My face," My heart said to You, "Your face, LORD, I will seek."

Truths that will help us see value in the circumstances we face:

1. The challenges we face are known by God
2. He has prepared a set of circumstances to enable us to grow in grace – so there are reasons behind it – pure joy, etc.
3. One perspective should be one of joy, knowing that God is in control.

The example of Jesus

What carried Jesus through the most difficult and testing trial that anyone in the history of the world has ever faced?

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for **the joy that was set before Him** endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The oil of joy is symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of Jesus is to receive, operate and dispense the oil of joy:

Psalm 45:7 "You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."

Quoted about Jesus in Hebrews 1:9 (same words) and also Jesus in Luke 4 quotes Isaiah 61 exactly as well:

Isaiah 61: 1, 3

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the LORD has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And the opening of the prison to *those who are bound*"

"To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified."

Joy is an attitude that believers can adopt and experience, despite the circumstances.

And it is a key identifying factor in those who believe in Jesus today, that in all circumstances, even in spite of their circumstances – they can experience and exhibit joy.

Example of Paul.

The letter of Paul to the Philippians is known as the letter of joy, such is the nature of the content and the attitude of Paul.

He uses the word rejoice 9 times, its full of contentment, praise, thanksgiving and affection.

But its not written from a comfortable study.

Its written by a man who is in chains, in prison in the early 60's AD. Paul knows his time is near.

And yet it is so joyful.

Paul has joy that the Gospel is preached and it is because he is in prison. His imprisonment was known throughout the Praetorian Guard – for him the joy was that all were hearing the Gospel and so he saw great value in his imprisonment.

What brings joy to Jesus?

In Luke 10 we are told that Jesus sent out 70 of His disciples and gave them authority to preach the Kingdom of God. And when they returned full of joy it says that in response Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit. He didn't just say 'Well praise God for that'. But that He celebrated, praised and rejoiced exceedingly.

And in

SLIDE 16

Luke 15:7, 10

I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance

Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."