

Meeker Christian Church
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What Makes for Great Joy?
6/1/25

Last week we heard Jesus, after the resurrection in Luke 24:36, greet the disciples with "Peace With You." Today we move to the close of the same chapter and the ascension of Jesus for the scriptural introduction of today's subject "joy."

Luke 24:50-53 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.

The disciples' joy in this passage contrasts with their sorrow and confusion at the crucifixion of Jesus 40 days previous. This joy is rooted in the assurance of Jesus' victory over death and His promise of the Holy Spirit. It reflects the fulfillment of Jesus' words where He tells the disciples that their grief will turn to Joy... John 16:20-22 *20 Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy. 21 A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.*

This joy is not merely emotional but is a profound spiritual condition resulting from the realization of God's redemptive plan through Christ. It also serves as a testament to the transformative power of the resurrection, which is a central theme in Christian theology.

Luke 24:52 Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.

WHAT MAKES FOR GREAT JOY?

Be reminded that happiness depends on the circumstances of what is happening whereas joy results from a right relationship with God and His righteousness.

The scripture carefully describes the obedience of the one totally sinless, righteous person ever to have lived on earth as he was humiliated, tormented, tortured, and crucified. The devil and his hordes of despicable demons must have celebrated with a glee and happiness that had never before nor ever again will be experienced in their realm. They could smell victory and domination over God and His spiritual realm with the murder of Jesus. However, the same Bible record describes that three days later their fate would be sealed! The grave could not hold God the Son - death had no power over Jesus who created all things as you recall... from Colossians 1:16 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and*

that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

Jesus arose from the grave and at the ascension taught the source and response to joy to the disciples and to all who will examine the Word.

How is the joy quotient in your life? Are you tired of fighting the system? fearing the future? struggling with the present? Or just too busy to think about it.

Look at God's word for the answer of What Makes For Great Joy.

Just before our scripture for today in Luke 24:44-53 *44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me." 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. 46 Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, 47 and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And you are witnesses of these things. 49 Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high." 50 And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. 52 And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen.*

Here are some pointers for great joy:

1. verse 45: He opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures = gaining understanding of scriptures results in joy.

2. verse 47: Repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in HIS name to all nations = Partaking in evangelism results in joy.

3. verse 48: You are witnesses = Your personal witness of what Jesus has done in your life is a source of joy for you and the listener. (I wish everyone of you would take a turn sharing your witness sometime in a worship service.)

4. verse 49: Bible promises fulfilled bring joy in the assurance of the validity of all scripture. We like those disciples are filled with joy because ...

5. verse 50: He led them ... AND US

6. verse 51: He blessed them ... AND US

7. verse 52: His resurrection/ascension was a fulfillment of prophecy as in Psalm 68:18 *You have ascended on high, You have led captivity captive; You have received gifts among men, Even from the rebellious, That the Lord God might dwell there.*

What continued the joy of those early disciples with the same example and benefit for us?

1. Worship in verse 52

2. Praise in verse 53

Worship, witnessing, praising and blessing God were for the evidential proof - that the Messiah had come; had redeemed them, and had ascended to heaven. The days of mourning were ended. They were filled with happiness and righteous joy at the assurance of redemption, and expressed what every Christian should experience and that is a sense of joy of the gospel message that a Savior has died, and risen, and ascended to God. Our earnest desire is to partake in prayers and thanksgivings to the God of grace for his mercy to a lost and ruined world.

It is our sacred prerogative to live in peace, contentment and joy. God created us to enjoy life, look at these instructions as preconditions of joy: Deuteronomy 6:1-9 *“Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, 2 that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ 4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. 6 “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

Did that scripture trip a trigger in your mind? When Jesus was asked in Matthew 22 about the greatest commandment 1500 years after Deuteronomy was written- verse 5 from Deuteronomy was his answer. A precondition for Joy is: *5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.* It seems logical that to the degree we live in obedience to the first and greatest commandment, is the peace / contentment / joy outcome in life. It's a life response to a spiritual relationship with the Heavenly Father.

Joy is a noun meaning great pleasure and contentment. The disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy, demonstrating that obedience to Christ's commands brings joy. We are called to find joy in following Jesus, even when the path of life is uncertain and difficult.

The Psalmist was given to express it like this: Psalm 37:3-4 *Trust in the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

Some 500 years after the Deuteronomy admonition the Psalmist reiterates for us that the precondition for joy is a serious-minded relationship with God's righteousness. The desires of a Christian's heart become an expression or pouring out of God's Holy will and purpose. And just like the record of the book of Job models God's ordained response to hardship and disappointment on earth, a believer's life is to live every moment in full awareness and anticipation of their mansion being prepared in heaven.

The devil does not want us to enjoy life and will use every means possible to disrupt the prospect and promise of eternal life in the new heaven and new earth. It is up to us to make the choices to arrange life so that the sin that keeps us from our created destiny of joy, no longer looks good to us.

Here are some quotes for your consideration:

1. Lewis Smedes: To miss out on joy is to miss out on the reason for your existence.

2. C.S. Lewis: Joy is the serious business of heaven.

3. Apostle Paul in Philippians 4:4-8: *Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be anxious for nothing, 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 minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things.*

4. I received this text earlier in the week from one of our own: Good morning! Thank you for the prayer! It is a busy season right now! God is working in our lives everywhere and I am so grateful for such an amazing church family to be a part of. ... I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness.