

JOY!

Lonnie Fritz – Central Church of Christ – July 5, 2020

Joy Intro

Warning, my introduction to my lesson is longer than normal and with the intention to cause a bit of un-comfortableness!

- Some of you believe that all the social distancing; closing of businesses and even churches and all the extra precautions is necessary. It to protect health care workers society and health and well being of all people living here.
- Others may believe that while the Covid-19 virus exists, it not any worse that any of the other virus outbreaks that the world has seen in our lifetime. Rather it is believed that some in the government are using the virus as a way of control and manipulation.
- Some of you believe that the reason that we are in such a mess is the mishandling of the virus is all Donald Trump's fault and if we had had a more competent person in like Joe (whatshisname) Biden we would be in a lot better shape. Win in November Joe!
- Others of you believe that the president is doing the very best job possible in such a difficult circumstance. That this country needed a president that would stand up to the left and that no matter what he says or does he will be condemned. He is accused of being xenophobic (having or showing a dislike of or prejudice against people from other countries) because he shut down boarders, yet also accused of not doing anything to stop the virus. We need four more years of Trump!
- Some of you believe that murder of George Floyd by a police officer show "systemic racism" in our police departments and society in general. That we have a built in bias against people with color in our country. Whatever it takes to change that including looting and robbing stores, riots, protests, defunding police departments, tearing down monuments.
- Others believe that the murder of George Floyd does not show "systematic racism" but that there will always be people with racism and a disdain for people that don't look like them. That some times people of "un-color" don't like people of color and people of color don't like people of "un-color" (sometimes called "reverse racism" which is still racism). However, most people in our country don't judge based on skin, but what's within. They believe that people are trying to tear us apart not bring us together.

- I have intentionally tried to raise the ire of all of you in this room and listening on line. Why? Because I want to preach about JOY today. Fine way to start you say. Well I think so – Because JOY is a choice! That we are always going to have life irritations! Some small – many times we do sweat the small stuff! Some big – like some of the things going on right now in our country and world. Some that could be bigger like, what if this is a precursor to our country being taken over by let’s say China? What if it became illegal to be a Christian?
- Do you think the Christians in the first, second, third century had it easy under the rule of Rome? JOY is a choice we make, even when our circumstances are not what we would like them to be.
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- The idea of preaching on JOY this day was not mine, it came from a Facebook post by Fate Hagood, minister of the Metro Church in Carson.
- “Several ministers in churches of Christ from across the United States are unifying our voices and efforts to encourage one another and the people of God during these trying times. With the goal of unity in mind, preachers of the gospel have agreed to preach one core message with a singular voice on the first Sunday in July 2020. That message is JOY.
- We invite all gospel preachers to join us in preaching, and every saint to join us in prayer.
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- It is my prayer that God’s people would not let circumstances or people who would like to divide or politics or anything rob of us of the JOY that we can experience as followers of Jesus.
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- John 15:10 If you keep My commandments, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and remain in His love. **I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.** This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.... Jesus said these words with his own crucifixion just down the road – And He knew it! Exactly what would happen.
- Jesus wants us to have a complete JOY!

There are so many ways that we could approach the subject of JOY from the Bible – Especially the New Testament:

- **Christianity is a religion of joy** - Phil 4:4 - Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 1 John 1:4 1 John 1:4 We write this to make our joy complete.
- **Joy is an evidence of who we say we are!** In other words, it is a fruit of having the Spirit in you Gal. 5:22
- **God wants us to have such joy that is hard to put in words.** 1 Pet 1:6-8
 - 1 Peter 1:6–8 **In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. ⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.**
- **Even in trials and difficulties James 1:2–3**
- “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, ³ because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.”

Because Joy is a Choice!

I would like propose JOY as an acronym – No, not a new one, but a true one! It has everything to do with priorities

JESUS
OTHERS
YOU

If we, God’s people get these priorities straight in our life we will truly have Joy!

Jesus Must Be First In Our Life!

- Until people get this first one right, I don’t care how much you achieve in the “pursuit of happiness” or how much others bring you joy – Your true JOY can not be experienced outside of Jesus!
- Philippians 1:20–21, 25-26 (NKJV) ²⁰ according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also **Christ will**

be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. ²¹ For to me, to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain.

- ²⁵ And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your **progress and joy of faith**, ²⁶ that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.

Jesus needs to be the very heart and focus of you!

- "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you! Galatians 4:19 (NIV)
- Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, ² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. **For the joy set before him** he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:1–3 (NIV)
- Lk.2:10 "Do not be afraid, for I bring you good new of great JOY that will be for all the people", Lk.24:52 "Then they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great JOY!
- If you find it hard to take a stand for Jesus, try kneeling first.
- Happiness and joy are not synonymous. Happiness depends on "happenings." Happiness fluctuates according to circumstances, the weather, how the children behave, who won the ball game, etc. One stomachache destroys it. One cutting remark ruins it. One sleepless night diminishes it. But joy is independent of circumstances. Joy doesn't fluctuate. It is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow because true joy depends on Jesus and He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Do You want JOY? Take a Stand for Jesus! It takes real courage to stand up and be counted, and really count for Christ!!!!

Others!

- Do you want to find JOY? It will NOT be found in selfish living! The focus on Jesus will cause us to focus on others. How can I help them? How can I teach them? How can I encourage them?
- Ephesians 4:29–32 (NIV)
- ²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.
³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of

redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Phil. 2:1-4

- **2** Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then **make my joy complete by being like-minded**, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.
- Matthew 7:12 (NIV) ¹² **“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”** We have come to call it the “Golden Rule” – I know that people are into breaking “Rules” right now. And certainly there are a lot society “rules” that are antiquated and many that are just not in accordance with God’s rules. But if there is any “Rule” that needs to be returned to society, it is this Golden Rule – If ya don’t done to you, don’t do it to someone else!
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- Matthew 22:37–40 (NIV)
- ³⁷ Jesus replied: **“ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”**
- When you hear about needing Food? Something to Drink? Some clothes to wear? Someone sick or prison? What can you do? Mt.25:31-46

You!

- Bet you thought I would say – You are Last... Nope, You Are Important!
- If you neglect your physical needs, what happens? YOU DIE!
- If you neglect your spiritual needs, what happens? YOU DIE!
- You are made in the image of God!
- Rom.12:3-8 We are not everything, neither are we nothing.
- ³ For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. ⁴ For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the **grace given to each of us**. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving,

then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

- **We are so important in God's eyes that Jesus was give for you Rom.8:32**

³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

- John 3:16 (NIV) For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

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Be careful what you believe and what you practice!

1 Timothy 4:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

By God's grace – You Are What You Are!

1 Timothy 1:15–16 (NIV)

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. ¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life.

- **How can we love our Neighbor, our Husband, wife, children or anyone like we should if we don't have a proper love for our self?**
- **Mt.22:39 (as yourself); Eph.5:28-30 “ Love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body...”**

Luke. 10:20 Rejoice because your name is written in heaven!!

We may not solve all of the problems of the world, but all who will follow the priorities of this simple acronym - J. O. Y, may enjoy True Joy.

I have told you these things so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. - Jesus