

Sermon 3/29/18 God's Will and Joyful Service John 15:9-14

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Consider Jesus and His disciples in the Upper Room the night before Jesus goes to the cross to pay for our sins...

- Hear Jesus' words of love for his disciples and us
- See Jesus' love for His disciples and us
- Experience the joy of Jesus that he shares with his disciples and us

The disciples of Jesus loved one another because Jesus loved them. We love one another because Jesus loves us.

See the joy that Jesus wants us to have. Experience the bond of faith that we have as we gather together to receive Jesus' Body and Blood.

In John 15 Jesus speaks about the joy that he has and the joy of those who follow Him.

"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete."

Jesus wants his disciples to have His joy.

What is this joy? It's a joy that comes from...

- Obedience to God
- Dependence upon God
- Giving ourselves in service to God and others

John 15:10 "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love..."

John 15:5 "Apart from Me you can do nothing."

John 15:12-13 “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.”

Joy comes from...

- **Obedience to God**
- **Dependence upon God**
- **Giving of oneself for God**

This type of “joy” flies in the face of our culture and what the world says is joy.

Our culture redefines joy as happiness and makes it an individual pursuit.

- TV ads where joy can be found if one buys this or that
 - Don't leave home without it
 - A diamond is forever
 - Have it you way
 - Put a tiger in your tank
- To be joyful one must be free...
 - from obedience to a Sovereign God
 - from dependence on a Sovereign God

Our culture wants to avoid suffering and loss as a way of protecting joy...worldly joy that is based on happenings...happenings to us that make us happy.

- TV ads from insurance companies and investment banks
 - You're in good hands
 - A business of caring
 - Allied on your side

- All your protection under one roof
- Peace of mind
- Set your own agenda
- Be independent of others
- Protect your stuff
- Preserve your own happiness

Obedience to the Lord and dependence upon Him is not always easy or fun to our sinful human nature.

- Losing something important brings grief not joy
- This is a legitimate human response
- We do grief over a loss.
- We do struggle with obedience or dependence upon God.

But Jesus offers us something that is better than what this world has to offer. He wants us to have real joy, true joy, that comes from obedience and dependence upon Him.

He wants us to have the joy that comes as we give ourselves away.

Why should we believe Jesus when it comes to joy?

Because we trust in Jesus.

The kingdom Jesus proclaims is one where...

- The first are last and the last are first
- The poor in spirit are blessed
- Those who cry over their sin are blessed
- We save our life by losing it in the Lord

In God's word joy comes...

- Not from freedom from God
- Not from independence from God
- Not from protecting our earthly stuff
- But from giving ourselves away in faith and service to the Lord.

Consider I Peter 1:1-8

We are God's elect – We belong to God

- We have a new birth into a living hope
- We have in heaven an inheritance that will never perish
- Our salvation and security rest in the free and merciful choice of God
- We are shielded by God's power
- Through trials our faith is being proved genuine
- No trials or persecutions can rob us of eternal life
- In Jesus we are filled with an inexpressible joy
- In Jesus we receive the goal of our faith the salvation of our souls
- We live in the certain hope of eternal life

The early Christians found joy not in their world but in Jesus. They experienced...

- Exile
- Persecution
- Scattering
- Suffering
- Grief
- Trials

Loss does bring grief – we know it – we experience it.

Our trials, struggles and persecutions strengthen our faith and makes us useful to God.

We know total obedience and dependence upon God goes against our sinful human nature. But as we obey and give ourselves to Him and others we will experience real joy.

In Christ we will experience...

- The joy of obedience
- The joy of dependence
- The joy of service and sacrifice

Jesus joy...

- Is in us – John 14:23
- Makes our joy complete
- Comes from obedience to the Father
- Comes from dependence on the Holy Spirit
- Comes from Jesus' service and sacrifice for us

Luke 19:10 “For the Son of Man came to see and to save what was lost.”

We share in the joy of Jesus. **Hebrews 12:2 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith,** who for the joy set before Him endured the cross...” Keep our eyes on Jesus not on ourselves or our circumstances of daily life.

We gather tonight like the disciples in the Upper Room. We desire for one another what Jesus came to deliver to His disciples and us: True Joy.

True joy comes from...

- Obedience to the Lord

- Dependence upon the Lord
- Giving ourselves to the Lord

True joy does not come from following and pursuing...

- TV ads
- Protecting our stuff
- Putting ourselves first
- Pursuing our own agenda

Jesus tells us what true joy looks like...

- It is found in the kingdom of grace
- It is found in Jesus