

Jesus and Joy

August 20, 2023

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ online ministry. This week's message is titled Jesus and Joy. Thank you to Glynnis, Ed, Jim, and Geoff for being part of the video. The scripture reading is Luke 10 17 to 24.

Welcome

Oh, good morning everyone. Oh, it's so good to see everyone. It's smaller numbers this morning. Everybody's summering and doing their wonderful things that they do in summer. It's certainly glad to see everyone that is here and we certainly welcome everyone that's online as well. We have a few birthdays this week. Dorothy, Ed, Len, and Sherry. So happy birthday to you and no anniversaries this week. Hannah K. is looking for a one-bedroom apartment. If you would speak to Barb or Don, if you have any leads on that, that would be awesome. And so, for prayer requests, Keith R is in hospital awaiting triple bypass surgery following a heart attack and he has pneumonia. So, we really do need to keep him in our prayers and pray that God will take care of that pneumonia because nothing really can happen while that's going on. And of course, Alan and Julie are mourning the passing of Alan's daughter, Dawn. Can't even imagine how that feels. Certainly, I know our hearts go out for them but if you'd also pray for their comfort and just and as well as for the comfort of their family. And so, if you would join me in a word of prayer, we'll pray for our service and, and have a great morning.

Dearest Lord God, thank you so much for all that you give us. God, we are so grateful. God, we look at the day and it's washed clean after yesterday's rain, and it reminds us how we're washed clean by the blood of your son. God, we are so grateful. So, so grateful. God, we thank you for all the blessings that you give us. We pray for, we pray for Keith, we pray for Alan and Julie's family. There are so many prayer requests, and we pray that you would be with each one of those as well as the caregivers in their lives. God, we know that giving care can be very challenging and so we pray a special prayer for those. God, we thank you. We love you. We ask you to bless our service and we pray that you will be adored. We pray that you will be just filled with, with the love that we know that you have for us. God, we love you so much and we're so grateful for you and for your son and for your spirit and it's in their names I pray. Amen.

Communion

For many of us this has been a summer season, but we've had several seasons in the last year or so where we have been called into a season of grief. There have been many situations recently where people have passed away, some unexpectedly, some expectedly. A little perspective. A friend of mine wrote some things this week that helped me to have perspective. I'm gonna read them.

"One year ago today, July 27th, 2022, at 5 30 p.m. my dear heartbroken daughters and I watched as their mother and my wife of 42 years breathed her last. That moment marked the conclusion of 25 horrific days while it was then unimaginable that she left us after such a short time being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. It was equally unimaginable that the year has slipped by since that day.

As a funeral director for 44 years, I have chosen in my life to retain a front and center seat the care of the broken-hearted. I could not have asked for a more meaningful cause to dedicate my life to. While those 44 years have gifted me with a lifetime of experiences and privilege of being invited into thousands of precious families' inner circle of sadness and pain, the past 365 days have taught me one hard truth. It is when you experience a death of such a at a personal level that you truly begin to understand that grieving is not an event, it's an experience. A journey and while you are surrounded by family and friends with the graceful compassion of love, ultimately, it's a journey that you must walk alone. One quickly understands the wisdom of the truth that while death ends life it does not end a relationship. This is what I have discovered. While in some days you search hard to find your joy in this journey it is there, and it lies in the treasures that you discover along the way. Like in my dear family as we did our best to hold each other up after we found ourselves on this unwanted path together. Like in my dear friends who understand and sometimes all to to all you really want is a near to listen and even sometimes just share quiet solitude. To appreciate texts of encouragement, a visit, a phone call just to see how you're doing, or a warm-hearted handshake or hug are the real nuggets that you hold on to and recall when you need them.

Anne, this is his wife, said it best after learning of her diagnosis when she reflected, "Life is not always fair but it's always good." At this point in my life while my best before date may be in my rearview mirror what is not what is not is the realization that she is right. We waste too much time in our lives dancing around clutter when in the end it means so little. Rather care for people who you care for. Life is always good. Treasure every day. Take a chance. Love unconditionally and most of all find your joy."

Well, in the season of grief we need that those kinds of words because it's very uplifting and helps us understand grief. I cannot imagine how the people felt as they looked up at this cross with this Savior this person who walked with them for three years. Had taught them. And modeled for them the characteristics of a good human being. See, modeled to them the characteristics of God. And they thought some way that what was going to happen is the Romans were going to be defeated and they had a new land to live in and that was all gone.

Communion is about seeing that. It's about seeing that sacrifice. It's about seeing that Lord and Savior. About seeing that gift from God and being thankful for it. And I think in life's death and Jesus' death as well as in my friend's wife dying that in the end it's about finding joy and I think as as we meet to remember Jesus, we can be emotionally connected to that loss but joyfully connected to that loss as well. So, life's not always fair but it is good. We pray that God will help us find our joy. Let's pray.

Our Father in heaven we are thankful to you for the great gift of your son the great love that you showed in sending him through the grace that you give us that you are a God of second chances. That you're a God of grace and mercy for this we are thankful for. And remembering Jesus at this time and remembering that gift helps us in our lives to be confident and courageous to do the kinds of things that you want us to do. To be the people that you want us to be. We pray Father that you will guide us in that pursuit. At this time, we remember his broken body we remember his blood that flowed free us from the eternal damnation of our sin. For this we are thankful for and in is this we find our joy in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reading

Luke 10:17-24

[Good] [m]orning. My reading this morning is from Luke chapter 10 verses 17 through 24. The 72 returned with joy and said Lord even the demons submit to your name. He replied I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. At that time Jesus full of joy through the Holy Spirit said I praise you Father Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to the little children. Yes, Father for this is what you were pleased to do. All things have been committed to me by my father. No one knows who the son is except the father, and no one knows who the father is except the son and those to whom the son chooses to reveal him. Then he returned to his disciples and said privately blessed are the eyes that see what you see for I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Sermon

Good morning, everyone. This message comes from a series I developed where I take a look at how Jesus interacted with humanity and our world, and we can see in what he does a pattern for ourselves. This particular one is entitled Jesus and Joy and I want you to think for a minute despite the temperature outside (although it's better today) that this is Christmas in July. I don't think that you would argue with me that perhaps the most joyous passages in the Bible are at Christmas. Luke chapter 2. So, this child was God's joy and the author of the fulfillment of God's plan. Yet he was born with the shadow of the cross upon him from that very first day. So yes, there's joy at his birth but it's a joy that anticipates who he will be and what he will do. Today like every Sunday we remembered his death and in fact that that part that Ed finished off with talked about remember your joy.

So, it fits in very well Ed thank you. What brings you joy? I'm sure there are a lot of things we could think about, but can we agree that renewing relationships is perhaps one of the highest in the lot? What brings God joy? Isn't it the same thing? Renewing his relationship with his children. In this announcement from the angels in Luke's gospel the world is about to change. The brokenness that had existed since Adam is finally going to be mended and the relationship God always wanted to have with us is going to be unendingly restored. What would give God more joy than that? So, today's reading came from Luke chapter 10. Let's kind of set the stage for that if you've got a Bible open it up but we'll start in in chapter 9. One of the things I like about Luke's gospel is the narrative. He puts Jewish Jesus in the Jewish landscape right from the beginning as the key to God's plan. So, beginning in chapter 9 things start out on a pretty good note. He sent out the 12 to preach the good news. They've been mentoring under him for some time and now they get their chance to strike out on their own from Jesus and begin their own evangelism. Peter makes a declaration that Luke uses as a turning point in his book. Others say he is John the Baptist or Elijah or one of the prophets of old, but Peter declares him God's chosen one. The Redeemer of Israel. The one they've awaited. And just as we're reading, and we feel that things everything's going pretty well, and Jesus is in favor with the people he brings this sobering thought. I don't want you to tell anyone, but I will suffer and be put to death. After three days I'll be raised back to life and that's enough to rock them back on their heels. Then follows the transfiguration. God himself affirms exactly what Peter had declared. This is my son. He has been

chosen for you. Listen to him. And the people watch as Jesus casts out an unclean spirit that was ruining a family's life in which no one else could overcome. And then we read while everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples listen carefully the son of man will be delivered into the hands of men and his disciples don't understand. In fact, they're caught up in arguments about who's going to be the greatest under Jesus. It's the second time that Jesus calls out what is ahead to their bewilderment. And then a verse that I love. Verse 51 of chapter 9. As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem resolutely. He knew what was ahead was going to be painful and physically exhausting. It was going to separate him from his earthly family and friends and even more importantly it was going to separate him from his father like had never happened in all of time. Wait a minute didn't you say the sermon was about joy? Can we get to that point? God's joy is always found in the dawn after the dark night. The calm after the storm because God's joy is in triumph over suffering. The Hebrew writer saw the same glorious goal that Jesus did. Hebrews chapter 12 and verse 2. 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.

Jesus was looking ahead to the joy of reunion to his wedding feast. Revelation 19 6 and 7 says hallelujah for our Lord God Almighty reigns. You might remember that we kind of sang that this morning, didn't we? Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory for the wedding of the Lamb has come. Facing the cross Jesus saw the ultimate outcome, a glorious outcome. He set out resolutely for Jerusalem knowing that his greatest test was ahead yet knowing that when it was done there would be reconciliation and celebration. And so, Jesus heads to Jerusalem through Samaria and just as the Jewish people had rejected him in his own home the Samaritans do the same in their country. And Jesus concludes that chapter of Luke's gospel by reminding the disciples that they too will have a burden to bear if they choose to follow him. There's a price that needs to be paid. Immediately on the heels of this and as chapter 10 opened Jesus makes his plan. He's going to send the 72 or some translation 70 ahead of him to prepare the way. Previously he had sent 12 now he's sending six times that many. It starts off well. The harvest is plentiful. There's an abundance for you to reap but then comes the hard part. You're going to be like lambs among wolves. These men knew what wolves did to sheep in the wild and they are the lambs. The young and inexperienced ones the ones most likely to be attacked. Jesus says you won't have money or food. You'll be dependent on the kindness of strangers and foreigners. Some places will welcome you, but others will reject you. He does give them some framing of the situation. Remember if they reject you it's really me they reject and if they reject me it's really God they're rejecting. It will be better at the day of judgment he says for Sodom with all its rebelliousness for which it was destroyed. It will be better for cruel Tyre and Sidon destroyed by the Greeks and Persians just as the Old Testament had warned. Jesus says if he had walked those city streets and healed their sick, they would have repented. Yet the cities he was sending his workers to were without remorse and kept to their selfish paths. Some pep talk; not the kind of morale booster you'd probably ask of your coach. With all that background we're ready to take a look at today's lesson.

So, in the reading that we had three times in this reading joy or rejoice are used. Verse 17 the 72 returned with joy and said Lord even the demons submit to us in your name. Verse 20 however do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. And verse 21 at that time Jesus full of joy through the Holy Spirit said I praise you Father Lord of heaven and earth because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father for this is what you were pleased to do. In Jesus' economy there are three types of joy. I'm

gonna call them good better and best. He identifies them in this passage and we can take a lesson from him to learn how to enjoy the good strive for the better and yearn for the best even if suffering has to come first. So, let's examine these three joys that are brought through the Spirit. How many of you have bought snow tires lately and I know this is the last thing you're thinking about while if all is heat. But remember it's Christmas in July. A local Grimsby merchant that I won't name but uses a red triangle as their logo likes to offer tires as good, better, and best. We could talk about how good the good ones are but that's for a different day. So, I want to look at these three spiritual joys and call them good better and best.

So, what's the good joy? The disciples returned we are told with joy because just as Jesus had overcome the demon in the boy the 72 reported that the demons submitted to them. This is the joy of success. We experience that kind of joy in life all the time when our team wins when we pass a difficult test or when we graduate after completing a phase of our education. But this kind of joy is made even better when it's in the spiritual realm. It's magnified for the 72 because it's in Jesus name that they've had this triumph. They're part of something bigger. They sense it and they know that it was his power and authority that brought the victory. They came back from their mission delighted. It was amazing Lord you should have been there. Even the demons fell when we invoked your name. Jesus doesn't hesitate to recognize the success. I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Literally I was watching the whole thing and it was a great victory. Jesus is saying that in those villages he saw a foretaste of what is to come. Satan and his clan are doomed. Martin Luther in a mighty fortress as our God puts it this way. The prince of darkness grim we tremble not for him. His rage we can endure for lo his doom is sure. One little word shall fell him. Jesus reminds the team that they've been part of the first foothold in which the kingdom of God has come to earth. Rejoice and celebrate. I've given you authority. You'll trample on the heads of these figurative serpents, these demons.

How? Because my father gave me authority and he gave me the power to pass it on to you. Jesus will later say that all authority has been given to him as a result of his obedience. Matthew 28 and 18. Jesus rejoices with him, with them excuse me. They've had success in his name. This is a good joy, the joy of success, but we know that not everything ends in success. This joy looks forward to still greater things. Jesus says however or nevertheless don't rejoice the spirit submit to you. Rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

So, we've seen the good spiritual joy, the joy of success in Christ, but now Jesus points them to a better spiritual joy. Your names are inscribed in heaven. This is the joy of salvation. You have a place and a relationship with God that is written and testified to by heaven itself. Your names are interwoven with his. He gave you authority, but he gave you something even better. He gave you sonship and not just the 72. He still gives sonship and daughtership. Those names are in his book. It doesn't take away from the joy of success, but it speaks to a far more fundamental reason for rejoicing. Death will come, but our names are in heaven and we will come to be recognized there by those names. And the really amazing thing, our last names will all be the same. Of Jesus, Edmond of Jesus, Lynn of Jesus, each one of us. This is a far better reason for rejoicing.

Speaking about the New Jerusalem, the book of Revelation reminds us that your name in the book is your guarantee into a perfect place. Revelation 21 and 27. "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." A place without darkness, lit by the glory of God himself. A place with no sorrow. In other

words, a place of pure joy. Jesus reminds the 72 that there is joy in knowing that their names are in the Book of Life. He'll go on in verses 23 and 24 to recall to them that the prophets and kings longed to understand these things, but they could not. They couldn't because the Son had not yet come to show what true intimacy with God really was. This was a privilege reserved for our generation. And that brings us to the best joy. The best are the greatest. The tires that will take us through the deepest snow with no hesitation and single-minded focus, to use a very poor analogy. This is the joy of sovereignty.

This is the joy that burst forth in adoration of the God of the universe. At the very moment that Jesus identifies the rejoicing of being in the book, it says he's filled by the Holy Spirit. In our tradition and perhaps because we're Canadian, we don't want to get too carried away. We tend to be very shy about being filled by the Spirit, but here we see it causing Jesus to break into a prayer of adoration. Verse 21 Luke tells us, "In that very moment," this was spontaneous and from the heart, "Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth." This is it. The best joy there is celebrating and praising God. And notice that all three persons of the God had are present. Jesus is there. He's filled by the Spirit in order to offer praises to the Father.

This is the greatest thing that we were created for. To experience God in all His fullness, the three persons, and know that all is well in the universe. Earlier I spoke about what makes God happiest. Its relationship, the inseparable intimacy of Himself in the Father and the Son and the Spirit, and when that is made most complete, when we become part of it, our names in the book look forward to that complete integration with God. Jesus goes on to say, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children." This is remarkable and God's wisdom shines through because He has made it so simple that children can see through to its truth. And finally, Jesus adds the reason why this is so glorious. "Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do." This is the greatest joy because glorifying the Father recognizes that it is His vision finally being realized. What God intended for His children is finally coming to fruition, life with Him eternally. And the remarkable part is that little children can understand that God loves them and has a place for them where they will always be together. You can't help but celebrate such a happy ending.

There is joy in the world everywhere, from beautiful sunsets to a baby smile to embracing an old friend after a long separation. They make our lives healthy and color our days with happiness. On a deeper level, there are the joys of being a Christian and being in God's work. This is a good spiritual joy that is found in the success of our ministry for the Lord. You've felt the warmth when you've cheered a sick sister. You've experienced the celebration of spurring one another on in song. You've felt the jubilation when another one is one to the Lord. But if that's the only joy we're taking from this world, we miss the bigger picture. It's good, but it's only the foundation that leads to true joy.

There's a better joy, a greater joy born of salvation, a joy in knowing that we belong to God, that a mansion awaits us, that nothing can separate us from God. For knowing how He has removed the block from our lives, removed our sin as far as from east to west. This is a more mature joy that isn't affected by a day when that brother we've tried so hard to help has fallen back again to the sin that's so easily ensnares. There's still a danger, however, in being satisfied with the promise of our names in heaven. As healthy and right as this is, it can leave us with tunnel vision. Salvation is something to celebrate, but we were surely meant for more than this. The best and greatest joy is the joy of sovereignty. To know and celebrate the very being of the God of the universe. To know and be known by Him. To participate

in Him in all His facets. The Father who is above all and created all that we see from His mere thoughts. To the Son who spoke us into being and upholds and sustains this world. To the Spirit that breathed life into us, that lives with us each and every day in comforts and guides us. To praise God for who He is, that will be our role in eternity. Be joyous that you have a part in God's successful ministry. Be joyful that He has promised you salvation that is indelibly attested in heaven, that He desires relationship, and greatest of all, rejoice that the sovereign God is in His heaven. That purity and life and love flow from Him. Jesus knew it and He gave praise. Your heart knows it too. God in all His goodness is the best reason for joy.

Closing

Geoff, that was awesome. That was really awesome. Thank you so much for teaching us in that way. It was amazing. Please join me in a word of prayer. God, oh my goodness, you are so good. Thank you so much for the incredible gifts that you give us. The gifts of good, better, and best joy. God, it's breathtaking. God, we praise you with all of our hearts and all of our souls and all of our mind and all of our strength. God, you are awesome. God, we thank you so much. We pray that you would allow this joy to stay with us all week and, gosh, forever. We love you, God, and we thank you for all that you give us. In Jesus' holy and precious name we pray. Amen. Have a great week.

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