

Three Degrees of Joy
Sermon prepared for WellSpring Church
Luke 10:17-24
May 8, 2011

1. Introduction: For many years I have been concerned about Joy.
2. Here is a statement from J. B Phillips *Plain Christianity*, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1955). talking about three characteristics of genuine Christians that have convince him of the truthfulness of Biblical Christianity: “The second characteristic which is common to all the best Christians is an unquenchable gaiety of spirit. Christians of course never expect , and certainly don’t enjoy, any particular immunity from trouble, but I find in them the ability, not only to cope courageously with their difficulty, but very often to cope good-humoredly and even joyfully.” page 13
3. The first degree of joy is over is a true and legitimate Joy over God’s Gifts and good things, success and the accomplishment of good things with God’s help
 - a. The 72 return with Joy! They were singing praises. Reminds me of Isa. 35:10
 - b. And what is the cause of this joy?
 - i. General: Joy over the success of the mission
 1. They must have experienced provision
 2. they must have experienced protection
 3. They must have been received in cities, towns and homes—contrasted with Luke 9:51ff
 4. They must have seen a glad reception of the new of the coming King.
 - ii. But Specifically: It is the Power over demons... contrast 9:40 “I begged your disciples to cast him out, but they could not.
 - iii. Contrast the report of the spies who were afraid God could not conquer the giants in the promised land?
 - c. Jesus joins their joy—“I saw Satan fall”
 - d. Jesus tells them and reminds them of the source of their authority and power.
 - i. I have given you authority
 1. serpents
 2. scorpions
 3. power of the enemy
 - ii. Nothing shall hurt you, that is ,ultimately and eternally, Luke 12:4-7
4. Joy over Eternal life: Do Rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.
 - a. He doesn’t mean do not rejoice at all over this display of God’s power, but in comparison to the greater joy this joy is truly secondary.

- b. Let me offer some cautions here about power, authority, and success—even spiritual power, authority and ministry success. Why?
 - i. Earthy and temporal successes are generally fewer and farther between than we might want. (Circumstantial) If my joy depends on spiritual or ministry success, there is a very large chance that I will have a staccato joy—When there is success I will have joy, when there is no success there is no joy.
 - 1. Three Examples:
 - a. William Carey
 - b. Henry Martyn
 - c. Samuel Zwemer—
 - 2. Leader who leads without apparent Success (Pastor, School Administrator)
 - ii. Earthy and temporal successes are fleeting (Elusive)
 - 1. The power of the world system
 - 2. The seemingly small gains.
 - iii. Earthy and temporal successes are seductive (Addictive)
 - 1. I look for success to carry me on
 - 2. The next success needs to be greater and higher
 - 3. Tim Keller
 - iv. Earthy and temporal successes are too often subjective (Man-Centered)
 - 1. Approval of others
 - 2. arguments, D.A. Carson
 - 3. I begin to think that my successes are because of me, begin to depend on me, I did it. Expert.
 - 4. Pride is so pervasive and subtle
- c. There is a better joy Jesus says than this circumstantial, fleeting, addictive self-centered joy—Do not rejoice in this—But Rejoice that you names are written in Heaven!
 - i. This is a continuing metaphor in Scripture
 - ii. How is this gotten
 - iii. What about those who doubt—we all do—there are days when both Reg and I doubt that I am a Christian.
 - 1. Trust in Jesus' Work
 - 2. Trust in God's Promise
 - 3. Do not trust in yourself, in your performance, your feelings, even your knowledge.
 - a. Romans 8:35-39
 - b. I Peter 1:3-9
 - c. Psalm 53
 - i. 1-5 none good
 - ii. God gives salvation
 - iv. Make certain that you have not regressed or relapsed to circumstantial, addictive, or subjective joy.

- d. What do I do?
 - i. When Trials come: my name is written in heaven
 - ii. When accusations come from the evil one: My name is written in heaven
 - iii. When Slander comes from man: My name is written in heaven
 - iv. When failure comes: My name is written in heaven,
 - v. When darkness of the soul comes, when the silence of God comes, when successes don't come, when dreams are fulfilled, when you are abandoned by friends, disappointed by leaders, misunderstood by others—my name is written in heaven.
 - vi. When your marriage is hard, when your job is impossible, when disease is unconquerable, when enemies are implacable, when man's approval is unattainable, when your own strength is unsustainable: Find your joy here. Your name is written in heaven.
 - vii. This is why we can say with Scripture
 - 1. Psalm 32:1, 10-11
 - 2. Psalm 51:6
 - 3. Psalm 118:24
 - 4. Neh. 8:10
 - 5. James 1:1
 - 6. I Peter 1:6
 - 7. I Thess. 5:16, Phil. 4:4
- e. Joy comes from knowing your name is written in heaven.
 - i. Are you joyful
 - ii. Is your name written in heaven
 - iii. Are you joyful?
- 5. Joy that is shared within the Godhead. Here we see the joy of Jesus as a model and example for our own joy.
 - a. Spontaneous Joy
 - b. In the Spirit (Who helps us)
 - c. It is joy in the Sovereign Grace of God
 - i. Hiddenness of Truth to the "wise and understanding"
 - ii. Revelation of truth to the little children
 - iii. Here is a complete reversal in the way we would do things.
 - d. Three quick applications
 - i. Here is reason to pray—God open the eyes of those who do not know you.
 - ii. Here is reason to seek humility—God break down my pride, humble me so that I may know your presence and ways
 - 1. Isa. 57:15; 66:3
 - 2. Psa. 51:6
 - 3. Because God resists the proud and exalts the humble.
 - iii. Here is reason to study Jesus--
 - e. Wisdom of Election—We cannot argue with God

- f. Jesus was Rejoicing in the perfect wisdom and purposed of a perfect sovereign God.
6. Back to our joy—
- a. We have been given the truth that kings, prophets, angels longed to look at.
 - i. Adam and Eve
 - ii. Abraham
 - iii. Jacob who wrestled with God
 - iv. Moses who saw God face to face but lived out 120 years depending on repeated sacrifices
 - v. Job who said y Redeemer lives and I shall at last one see him
 - vi. The Judges who saw the power of God intermittently
 - vii. David Who said One thing I ask
 - viii. The people of Israel who suffered under faithless kings
 - ix. Isaiah of the suffering servant
 - x. Jeremiah do not boast
 - xi. Ezekiel who saw the glory of God depart from the temple and was given the vision of the dry bones
 - xii. The hundreds and thousands of mothers who gave birth to sons and wondered if finally this would be the promised Messiah
 - b. You have received a knowledge that the angels who look upon the glory of God want to be able to see and to know.
 - c. So why should I be anxious, downhearted, discouraged, defeated? “Easy,” you say.
 - i. I am sinful
 - ii. I am a failure
 - iii. People do not act the way I think they should act
 - iv. Circumstances are horrible
 - v. the future seems dim
 - d. The question is why shouldn't I be joyful?
 - i. there may be small saddnesses
 - ii. there may be small defeats and retreats
 - iii. There may be people and situations that aggravate and frustrate, anger and hurt—
 - iv. BUT Rejoice in this, God has shown you his great grace, Your name is written in heaven and there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus.
 - v. But Rejoice in this your heavenly Father is Sovereignly over all that comes in your life!