

True Joy - The Wisdom of Philippians
True Joy Can Only Be Found In Jesus (various texts)
8-29-10
Scripture Reading - Philippians 2:5-11

Final message from one of my favorite books of the Bible

- Encouraged by two people reading Philippians this week
- End it where we began, one year ago, with the following premise...

We're all searching for joy

- Pascal quote
- We all want to be happy, and that desire drives all of our actions, even self destructive ones like suicide.

The problem is, we're searching for joy in all the wrong place

- God created us to find our joy in Him, which makes all the sense in the world if you think about it.
 - o Genesis 1 teaches that God created mankind in His image to care for and rule over His creation under His wise and loving authority and direction. God provided mankind with everything they needed, including relationship with each other and *especially relationship with Him* as He came and walked with them in the garden in the cool of the day. It was the ideal situation, it was the way it was meant to be, that is until sin crept in.
 - o **Psalms 16:11 (ESV) says of God**
¹¹ ... in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.
 - o **John 17:3 (ESV) Jesus describes eternal life this way**
³ And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.
 - o **Acts 17:26-27 (ESV)**
²⁶ And (God) made from one man every nation of mankind...²⁷

that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us,

- o Thus God's desire for all of us is that we seek and find our joy in Him.
- God intended the joys of creation to point us toward *true joy*, in the Creator Himself. But instead of following the beams of light up to their Source, our eyes have become fixated on the beams instead. Instead of worshipping and serving the Creator, as God intended, we worship and serve the creation instead. This exchange (which is called idolatry), not only dishonors, angers, and saddens God, but causes us to miss out on what is clearly best, relationship with the Creator Himself.
 - o **Romans 1:18-25 (NIV)**

¹⁸The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, ¹⁹since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. ²⁰For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles...²⁵They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen.
 - o As C.S. Lewis so amply puts it, our desire for joy is not our problem. God gave us that desire, and strongly encourages it in His Word. *Our problem is, we're seeking joy in all the wrong places*
 - Lewis quote

- The scariest thing about the exchange we make, creation for Creator, is that Satan has blinded our minds so that we can't even see it.
 - o **2 Corinthians 4:3-4 (ESV)**
³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴*In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*
 - o **Titus 3:3 (ESV) – because of our blindness we become slaves**
³For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, *slaves to various passions and pleasures*, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.
 - o Class of 93 “Drink till you don’t have feelings anymore” mixer
 - 527 friends 37 attending 82 maybes 1 not attending
 - o The BIG QUESTIONS about Christianity
 - 635 friends 2 attending 5 maybes 26 not attending
- The only Person who can open our eyes and save us from our sin and slavery is Jesus.
 - o He defeated Satan, sin, and death once and for all by dying on the cross 2,000 years ago.
 - o He rose again three days later, appeared to more than 500 eye witnesses over the course of 40 days, ascended into Heaven, and began to draw people onto Himself, by His Holy Spirit, through the Gospel.
 - o If we believe the Gospel, turn from our sin, and call out to Him for help, He will fight for us and free us from the controlling power of sin in our lives.
 - o In and through all of this, Jesus saves us from sin and slavery and begins to show us what true joy is all about, relationship with Him.

- Nowhere I have seen the cycle of creation, sin, and redemption more clearly and powerfully depicted than in *Lighthouse's Everything Skit*

The Apostle Paul experienced what that girl experienced when he was in His early 30's. As result, Paul dedicated the rest of his life to proclaiming what he'd quickly come to know, *that true joy can only be found in Jesus.*

- Nowhere does he proclaim it more clearly than in His letter to the Philippians.
 - o **Philippians 3:1 (ESV)**
¹ Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord...
 - o **Philippians 4:4 (ESV)**
⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.
 - o **Philippians 1:21-23 (ESV)**
²¹ For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. ²³ ...My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.
 - o **Philippians 3:7-8 (ESV)**
⁷ (But whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.) ⁸ Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing (greatness) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
 - () above are my insertion from the NIV
- Paul's all sufficient, all satisfying relationship with Jesus was what allowed him to do the many wonderful, but seemingly impossible things he calls the Philippians to do in his letter to them.
 - o Do nothing from rivalry or conceit but, but in humility count other more significant than yourself
 - o Do all things without grumbling or questioning
 - o Rejoice in the Lord always

- o Not to be anxious about anything but in everything to pray with thanksgiving
- o Be content in all circumstances

I never would have thought a life like this were possible, had Jesus not freed me from my sin and idolatry and opened my eyes to His superior goodness 12 years ago.

Since then, I've come to experience what so many experienced before me as they began to follow the beams of light back up to their Source, *true joy, as God intended it to be.*

- **1 Peter 1:8-9 (NIV)**

⁸Though 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, ⁹for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- Augustine quote

- **Philippians 3:7-8 (ESV)**

⁷(But whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.) ⁸Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing (greatness) of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ

My very sincere hope is that if you've been coming to TWE for any length of time at all, the message that true joy can only be found in Jesus is not new to you.

What want to do with our remaining time is to try and describe to you what true joy in Jesus looks like, in order to further inspire you to seek it for yourself.

What I love about Jesus...

- He gets me
 - o He created me
 - o He knows my every thought, word, and deed

- o He walks with me through every step of my life
 - o He has faced all that I've faced and much, much more
 - o I can always be totally honest with Him
 - Despite the fact that He gets me, He still loves me
 - o I'm amazed by His mercy
 - o I'm amazed by His grace
 - o I'm amazed by His patience
 - **Romans 2:3-4 (ESV)**

³Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God? ⁴Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?
- He's always there for me
 - o I love that I can go to Him anytime, anywhere and He's always there
 - I never get a voice mail or an out of office reply
 - o I love that I can go to Him in good times and in bad
 - Both situationally and personally
- He always knows just what to do and just what to say
 - o Countless times He's spoken to me through His Word, prayer, circumstances, people, mistakes I've made, etc.
 - o He's not afraid to say the hard things nor to call me to do hard things, but He always does so at just the right time and in just the right way
- Not only does He always want what's best for me, but He always knows what's best for me and brings it about as well.
- He helps me and empowers me to do what I could never do on my own
- He inspires me to be who I could never be on my own
- With Him, the best is always yet to come

True joy can only be found in Jesus. Seek your joy in Him today.

Prayer = Dave and Shayna J

One thing that I'm afraid hasn't come through loud and clear is *why relationship with Jesus is so great*.

I think there are three things, practically speaking that keep people from pursuing a relationship with Jesus.

- 1) Unbelief
- 2) Ignorance
- 3) Inexperience

My hope is that the upcoming fall series will help and inspire those who are struggling with unbelief, and that what I'm about to share right now will help and inspire those who are struggling with either ignorance or inexperience.