

SUNDAY MORNING 12 SEPTEMBER 2021

The full measure of the joy of Jesus

We have spent the past weeks with Jesus' disciples at His feet and learned about Him. Now Jesus' hours as human being are few. And now He prays. And His prayer opens a window for us to our Father's heart. Jesus introduces us to God as our Father. And He prays for us so that we will experience eternal life. This He said is to know God intimately.

He prays that Father will preserve and protect those who belong to Him, especially in the light of the persecution that will come. Jesus told them that the people will hate and despise and persecute them, even killing some of them. And now He prays and says in verse 11 that He is now returning to His heavenly position.

John 17:13-19

"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14 I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15 My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified."

If I have to write one Word about the God and about the Bible and about Jesus, that's the word love.

Love

It's God story with people. The Upper Story of God is the story of God's love. Why did God make humans in the first place? So He can mess with them afterwards and hate them? Certainly not. We read early in the creation story that God gives Adam His breath of life and then transforms the woman with compassion and precision from the man's rib. And then He came to visit them.

The story of the devil is the opposite. The wicked, the devil, satan, the father of lies has only one thing in mind and it is hatred and destruction. Hate God, hate the people God has

made. So, he walks around looking who he can tempt to follow him. He is even so arrogant to tempt Jesus.

Now we know that the story of love which was born in the "upper story" plays out in the "lower story," people's story, by that Jesus, Himself God, comes to earth and dies in love, God's love, as a substitute, for the people whom God loves so incredibly.

This prayer of Jesus actually tells only about His love and care for His disciples and for us His followers. He wants us to spend eternal life with Him and Father. He doesn't want anyone to go astray and be lost. Knowing that He is going back to His Father, He prays that they and we will experience His joy.

My joy

John 17:13

I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

What are these things He says?

All the things He taught them that night and before that, and also what he prayed until now:

- He earnestly loved his people.
- He went to prepare a place for those who believe in Him.
- He introduced to them His Father and promised them the Holy Spirit and promised that He will comfort and guide and teach them.
- He prayed that they will be protected and that they will stand firm— spiritually — if they are hated, despised, persecuted, and killed.

And now Jesus comes and prays for them and for us, that we and them will have His joy, but not just a little, to His fullness.

so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

Let's take a good look at the words of this sentence.

Whose joy is this?

- **Jesus' joy**

And what is Jesus' joy? I think the essence of Jesus' joy is that He is the beloved child of His Father.

Mathew 3:17b

This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.

This joy of Jesus is not determined by His circumstances, but by the firm confidence that whatever may happen to Him on earth cannot and will not change anything about His sonship. So, if Jesus prays that His disciples and we will experience His joy to its fullness, it is that we who are children of God will be able to believe and trust that nothing can take away our son- and daughter-ship.

John 10:28

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

It should make you and I feel overjoyed. Jesus' heart full of love wants us to know in spite of our circumstances that no death or life, or angels or evil powers, will be able to separate us from the love God has for us. This is amazing love.

Jesus' joy is that He can receive and display His Father's **glorious greatness**. It's nothing else in your and my lives. I am the happiest when I can be busy with Father and the thing of Father. Quiet time is not a drag for me, I don't always make enough time, but it's always good to be able to talk to Father and read His Word.

A second important thought is that I think Jesus is certainly also happy that He is going back to His Heavenly position to sit on His throne in heaven, where His **glorious greatness** will be restored and to whom all people will bow down and worship Him. It should also fill you and me with unspeakable joy. We are also on our way to our eternal home, in a glorified body, forever with God.

2 Corinthians 5:1

Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands

The third reason for Jesus' joy was that He wanted to introduce them to the Holy Spirit. He knows that He will not only leave them behind, but that He gives them and us, the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit brings comfort and His fruit is love, joy, etc. It should also fill us with great joy to know that we have God's Spirit living in us and that consequences of His presence are joy.

A fourth reason for Jesus' joy is certainly because He knows He will return one day. Yes, He prays just before His departure to God, but He will come back on the clouds one day. That's what He came for, it will certainly be a happy day when Jesus returns. He says there will be no tears, sorrow, sickness, death and pain with Him. We can look forward with His joy to that day when we will forever be in God's presence.

But Jesus and heaven also rejoice over the conversion of sinners.

Luke 15:10

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

So to experience Jesus' joy completely means that we will rejoice with Him over one person who gives his or her life to God. And so, we are all sent to tell people about Jesus' salvation. And with joy.

But Jesus prays not only to His Father that we may have a glimpse of His joy, but in its fullness.

so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

- **The full measure**

Jesus can't think in half measures. For Him, it's all or nothing. If He loves it, it's 100%, 100% of the time. When He forgives people, He forgives all things, always. If He shows mercy, it is also 100%, 100% of the time. And it's the same with his joy. If He's happy, it's 100%, completely, perfect.

The Greek word *pleroo* has so many translation possibilities:

to make full

to cause to abound

to complete.

to fill to the top: so that nothing shall be wanting

to full measure, fill to the brim.

to accomplish, to carry out

And much more.

So, what Jesus prays for His disciples and for us is that we will have an abundance of His joy in us. To rejoice like Him that God is our Father. To rejoice like Him, over the fact that He is preparing a place for us in heaven. To rejoice like Him over the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. To rejoice like Him and look forward to our final, in person, meeting with God. And To rejoice like Him over the salvation of one soul.

So Jesus wants to give us His joy in abundance.

so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them.

- **Within them**

It's an "amazing" thought for me. That Jesus prays for me and for you that His joy, to its abundance, will be in you and me. In other words, our joy is not determined by circumstances, but by what is in us. "**Happiness**" I said back awhile, has to do with "**happenings**." If good things "**happen**", we are happy. If bad things "**happen**," we are unhappy and sometimes angry. Therefore "**happiness**" happens outside of ourselves.

But the joy of Jesus is planted in us and we receive it with the Holy Spirit. And with Jesus' joy, we can do the same as we do with the Holy Spirit. We can put it in the background or allow ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit and God's joy.

And as I said last week and so many other times before, nothing can take it away. The joy of knowing that I am fully accepted by God as His child cannot be taken away by circumstances. The fact that I know I will one day spend my eternity with God and other believers cannot be taken away by suffering and hardship and sorrow.

That's what Jesus told His disciples just before He prayed and that's why, despite persecution, the disciples joyfully preached the good news. Nothing could stop them.

John 16:22b

I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.

I said about we can write one word over God's story and the Bible and that is love, but I think we can also comfortably write joy over God's story. You and my salvation from sin and death are not trouble or duty to God. That's what the Bible is all about. God's story with people full of sin. If Adam and Eve had not sinned and neither did the people after that, God's story would have been completely different. For Jesus, it was pure joy to save you and me and to make us children of God.

Hebrews 12:2b-3a

For the joy set before Him 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 sinful men.

It is for this Divine, Jesus joy, that Jesus prays for you and me and for His disciples. Someone once said:

Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright and the determined choice to praise God in every situation.

John 14:8

I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.

I say again over the Bible is written God is love and His joy in you is complete. Jesus prayed and said, "I have given your word."

Throughout His ministry, Jesus regularly referred to the Old Testament, and He said that no one should change it. So, although He knows everything and could say whatever He wanted, He showed the reason for His coming to earth from the Word.

The greatest joy besides the fact that Jesus saved us from sin and death is the Word of God. On 21 October 2001, next month, 20 years ago, the Turks first received the complete Bible in Turkish. A few days later, an American and I hosted a conference on missionary work in Turkey. I still remember it so well, how glad the Turks were to have a complete Bible for the first time in their hands.

When we moved to Turkey a year later, I was just amazed at the believers' knowledge of the Bible and especially the Old Testament, which they could have started reading only a year earlier. I still remember it so well when I visited my friend Gursel at his business he didn't read the newspaper, but the Bible. He sadly died earlier this year of Covid.

When you go to Israel, you only see the joy on people's faces as they read the Old Testament. So, to experience Jesus' perfect joy in abundance, He gives us His Word.

Psalm 119:162

I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure. (NKJV)

This great treasure Jesus says He gives you and me and His disciples, because we belong to God and not to the world.

Jesus knows it's going to be hard in the world. He knows that people can't be sure of anything. Look how Covid has come to disrupt our lives, then we are not talking about the uncertainties about work, health etc. But what stands out is God's Word. It's unchanging, incorruptible, it can never lose its power. We can rejoice about that.

Why is it necessary for us to love God's Word and spend time with it? For at every corner stands the liar, the deceiver, satan, the devil, the wicked one, seeking to devour us. He is the joy-thief. The one who doesn't want us to live in joy. The Holy Spirit teaches us the truth, the devil leads us into the lie.

So, if Jesus prays for us and His disciples, He knows He is going back to His heavenly throne, but that we remain in this world until He will return. And in this world the non-believers will hate and despise and persecute and even kill us, and there is also the evil one. But He is comfortable to go because He gives us the GPS (Scripture) to make it, and the Holy Spirit as the voice, indicating the direction.

John 17:15-16

My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of it.

God wants us to be obedient, good, faithful children of Him and live in harmony with His will, in joy. On the other hand, the evil one is. And he's not planless.

2 Corinthians 2:11

in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

He's a "schemer." "The great pretender." All of us experience from time to time the attacks and temptations of the devil. If you take Jesus seriously, you must also take the devil seriously. Jesus certainly does, so He here prays for Father to keep us and His disciples from the evil one.

That word means something like *to guard, to take care of it.* The problem is not with God. As long as I seek my strength from Him and live close to Him, the devil will flee and have no impact on my and your life.

James 4:7-8

Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash

Sin is a deal with the devil and it always leads to alienation from God. Sin causes my relationship with God to be disturbed and then I can no longer hear His voice and do His will. And Jesus knows this, and therefore He prays that Father will protect us if we submit to Him and live close to Him.

Maybe it would have been easier if we could just lock ourselves away in a monastery. But we cannot, we live in this evil world, and never can we become too comfortable with the world and the devil and his **schemes**.

What's the antidote to the devil's "**schemes?**" James says, "*Submit to God, and draw close to God.*" And Jesus prays specifically for it in His last prayer, for us and His disciples.

John 17:17

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19 For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

A few weeks ago, I also talked about the word holy/sanctify.

Sanctify them

- to cause someone to have the quality of holiness*
- to dedicate to God,*
- to be set apart for God*
- to make a person the opposite of common*

What is common? "Oh man, don't be common," or the haughty ones and important people say, "Those people are just common."

The perfect joy of God should come upon you this morning when you hear Jesus praying for you and me and His disciples, "Father, keep them from being commony children of yours. *Sanctify them, put them aside for you.*"

Athletes can only be successful if they dedicate themselves to exercise and the right diet. That's what Jesus prays. He prays that, as children of God, we will be able to act successfully against evil, because it is a joy to us. That will help us not to be common, but holy.

Then, as God's children, we can help the world and tell them about the love of God and of the joy of being a child of God. This is what the world needs. People who say they believe in God and love Him. And they take God's Word serious, and actually living accordingly. Live as people who set apart from the rest of the sinful world's schemes, because we are set apart by God, for God. Live in the world with the testimony of God's love and joy.

Conclusion

A person who is God's child is the opposite of common. "**We are not commoners, we are royal.**" We are the children of God, the King of kings.

The problem is, I can say that I love Jesus and send 100's of Facebook messages and read the Bible and learn it from the top of my head, if that love for God and knowledge of His Word is not evident of a life of total devotion, then it will make no impact in the world.

- People want to see you live differently, think differently, talk differently.
- You have other values, other plans for the future.
- You also think differently about how you raise your children and spend your time.

There is no way a child of God can participate in the "**common foolishness**" of this world and think it will draw people to God's church. Even if people may not like Christians' dedication to God, it will eventually convince them, because they are beginning to see the difference between dedication and "**commonness**."

Jesus prays for His disciples to experience the full joy of Him himself. He gives them His Word and He **prays** that our Father will teach and help us and protect us from the schemes of the devil. He prays that we will not be "**common**" but will stand out, excelling, as one of His children.

Why? - So that the world may believe!!!

God's Word is different for each of us.

- Perhaps you need to realize again the joy it was for Jesus to save you.
- Perhaps you hear this morning that I need to read and meditate on God's Word more often with joy.
- Perhaps you hear this morning, that you may be living too close to the world and too easily yielding to the devil's schemes. Perhaps you need to be less occupied with the things of the world and become more occupied with the things of God. Or more so with the God of the things.
- Perhaps sometimes you act "**common**" and need to realize who you are in Christ and live like someone who has been taken.
- Perhaps you need to talk more about Jesus in your home or work, or friends.

I said in the beginning that love and joy is written over the Bible and God. I pray that God is love and God is joy are written over your heart.