The Journey Begins

#1 Finding Joy In The Journey

Phil. 1:1-2; Acts 9:1-16; 16:6-40

Introduction

* How many of you want to live a life of Joy.
  - Everyone wants life of joy.
  - We know Bible promises us Joy.

"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full. John 15:11"

* Yet even many Christians would have to admit they don’t have any real and lasting joy.

** I believe that as we Journey through life – there is real and lasting joy that can charge and recharge our hearts everyday, – That we can experience real and genuine joy in the midst of the ups and downs, the tragedies, hardships and difficulties of life.

* Sometimes life is difficult and you have to get it in perspective and that’s what we’re going to try and do in this series. See life in perspective so that we can experience real and lasting joy.

Dear Mom and Dad,

I have so much to tell you. Because of the fire in my dorm set off by student riots, I experienced temporary lung damage and had to go to the hospital. While I was there, I fell in love with an orderly, and we have moved in together. I dropped out of school when I found out I was pregnant, and he got fired because of his drinking, so we’re going to move to Alaska, where we might get married after the birth of our baby.

Your loving daughter

PS: None of this really happened, but I did flunk my chemistry class and I wanted to keep it in perspective

* Joy can be a matter of perspective.

** Common Definition of Joy

Intense and especially ecstatic or exultant happiness. b. The expression or manifestation of such feeling.

* the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires – a state of happiness or felicity

* Often Equate Happiness With Joy
  - So we try all kinds of ways to make ourselves happy.

Article 50 Ways To Find Joy:

Pat a pet. Rub a good dog. Scratch a cat. Pets love us unconditionally and relieve our stress

Buy something beautiful. Place a small but exquisite painting, handmade vase, or other piece of art prominently in your home. Admire it often.

Add greenery. Adorn your desk and kitchen counter with cut flowers, houseplants, or potted herbs. Plants are proven mood enhancers

Relish a juicy read. When you start a book and know that it’s going to be good, take a moment to enjoy the tingling in your toes.

Care for yourself. Gently brush your hair or massage your scalp every night before you go to bed.

Jump for joy. Literally. Hopping up and down in place for 30 seconds infuses you with energy and youthful vigor.
Croon in your car. Stash a cassette tape whose lyrics you know by heart in your glove compartment. When you're stuck in traffic, play it and sing along as loud as you can.

Bake cookies. And bring them to work

**Okay list of good things to do ---- But don't find anything there that will give a deep seated, lasting joy.

We live in a generally sad world, a fallen world well acquainted with despair, depression, disappointment, dissatisfaction, and a longing for lasting happiness that often never comes to pass. Moments of pleasure and satisfaction are scattered through the general pain and sorrow of life. Many people have little hope that their situation in life will ever change much, if any, for the better. Hopelessness tends to increase with age. Long years of life often become long years of sorrow, unfulfillment, loss of loved ones and friends, and often physical limitations and pain. Such decreasing times of happiness tend to produce a morbid sadness and lessening satisfaction with life.

Most people define happiness as an attitude of satisfaction or delight based on positive circumstances largely beyond their control. Happiness, therefore, cannot be planned or programmed, much less guaranteed. It is experienced only if and when circumstances are favorable. It is therefore elusive and uncertain.

**Illustrate: Tom Brady

NFL Quarterback for New England Patriots - one of the best – class act
Signed $ 60 million contract - 3 Superbowl victories. Interview with Tom Krof of “60 Minutes”

“Why do I have three Superbowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, may a lot of people would say, 'I reached my goal, my dream, my life..' Me, I think, 'God, it's got to be more than this.' I mean this isn't, this can't be what it's all cracked up to be.'
- When asked what the answer was – “I wish I knew. I wish I knew I love playing football and I love being quarterback for this team. But at the same time, I think there are a lot of other parts about me I'm trying to find.” (Servant Magazine - Prairie Bible Institute = Issue 80)

* SO – AS YOU MAKE YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE – WHERE DO YOU FIND TRUE AND LASTING JOY?
– How do we find Joy In The Journey?

** I Want us to take a little journey this morning with three significant stops along the way.

I. **Stop One:**

Phil. 1:1-2

61 AD – Nero is Emperor of Rome
- While the Romans are Romanizing Britain - Paul is sitting in a Roman prison.
- Mark – is being executed for having introduced Christianity to Europe.

(Review who is writing and who is receiving the letter)

Saints: - called out by God – followers of Christ - everyone

* Bondservant = slave
– Hardships etc. Paul speaking of Joy
– Is in Roman Prison while he writes etc.

* To be a Christian is to be a slave to Christ

**Foundational Truth # 1

To experience God’s joy you must be a Saint of God - Phil. 1:1

II. **Stop Two:**

Acts 9:1-16

40 AD - 20 yrs prior to writing Philippians
Lord, what would you have me do

* Surrender to Lordship of Jesus Christ
  - began Christ centred life – from this moment on

Foundational Truth # 2
To experience God’s joy you must live a Christ centred life.

- How do you enter that life? Let’s go to stop Three.

III. Stop Three: Acts 16:6-40
51 AD - Paul is on 2nd Missionary Journey
  – Spirit directing them
  – Macedonian Call – “Come over and help us.”

Creation - Fall – Loss of Life etc.
* We were made to experience joy through intimacy with God.
  - Fall - lost spiritual life - God connectedness
  – Cannot experience life the way God intended and - cut off from true source of joy

* People in a made effort to replace that joy in all sorts of ways with no lasting success.

  – Fruit of God’s spirit in our life –
  **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. (Gal 5:22-23)**

To Experience True Joy You Need New Life – connection with God

3 Examples:

**1. Finding Joy In Philippi**

  i) Lydia

  ii) Slave Girl

  iii) Jailer

**2. Finding Joy For Your Journey**

* Others Have Found Joy

* You Can Find Joy In The Journey

Conclusion
An old woman dearly loved her Lord. Often her cup of joy overflowed. A favourite expression of hers was, “Praise the Lord!” Often, in God’s house, when the minister preached, she would say, “Praise the Lord!” Sometimes, however, the minister was disturbed by this, and he would lose his line of thought - and so he considered how he might kindly discourage the old woman’s outbursts. The woman was very poor, and therefore the minister had an idea. He offered her a parcel of groceries every month on behalf of the Benevolent Fund if she would only refrain from saying, “Praise the Lord!” during his sermons. She greatly needed the groceries, so she did her best to earn them on the minister’s terms. For many Sundays, she kept perfectly quiet during the sermon. One day, however, the minister preached on forgiveness of sin, with its attendant blessings and joys. And as he preached, the old woman thought less and less of the groceries, and more and more of the joys of salvation. Finally, she could stand it no longer. To everyone’s surprise, she cried out: “Groceries or NO groceries - PRAISE THE LORD!”

Spiritual joy is not an attitude dependent on chance or circumstances. It is the deep abiding confidence that regardless of one’s circumstances in life, all is well between the believer and the Lord. No matter what difficulty, pain, disappointment, failure, rejection, or other challenge one is facing, genuine joy remains because of that eternal well-being established by God's grace in salvation. Thus, Scripture makes it clear that the fullest, most lasting and satisfying joy is derived from a true relationship with God. It is not based on circumstances or chance, but is the gracious and permanent possession of every child of God. Therefore it is not surprising that joy is an important New Testament theme. The verb rejoice (chairœ) appears ninety-six times in the New Testament (including those times when it is used as a greeting) and the noun joy (chara) another fifty-nine times. The two words appear thirteen times in Philippians.

True and lasting joy is found in:

1. Knowing Jesus Christ
2. Living Under The Lordship Of Jesus Christ