

THE SECRET OF BEING HAPPY

John 16:19-24

Introduction: Are you happy? An odd question? We can tell when others are not happy can't we. Happy people are friendly, eager, working, always read to tell somebody about their church and faith. They seem to have something they want to share. The condition of one's relationship with the Lord can be seen in whether that person is happy or unhappy. If the relationship with the Lord is not right, then there is unhappiness, selfishness, stinginess, grumbling, fault-finding, "my way or no way" attitude. We don't have to encourage or beg happy Christians to come to church services.

Also our private lives reveal a lot such as secret sins, ugly language, drinking, gambling, dishonesty for all these and more destroy happiness in the lives of Christians.

Real joy is normal to the devoted Christian. While others seek thrills and are left empty, joy is a witness that tells others that one is right with God and a symptom that indicates that one is living life at its best, that one is happy. If you have joy inside, it will express itself on the outside in some manner.

There is a fine line between joy and happiness. Joy is the feeling of well being and happiness just springs spontaneously up inside us. It is that delight inside that does not change with the weather. Where happiness of the world, the natural emotions, come and go like the rain. This is not the kind of happiness we need or are to seek. However it is the only happiness that some will ever know.

I. JOY IS THE CENTER OF CHRISTIANITY

1. Christianity is the only "religion" that has JOY as a primary aim. The keynote of Christianity is JOY.
2. 60 times JOY is used in the New Testament and all at very important places: the birth of Christ, Kingdom of Heaven, the Marriage Feast, upon a person's Repentance, when the believer is told "enter thou into the joy of the Lord," and many other places.
3. Jesus pointed out that Christian Joy is different from anything the world has.
 - Non Christian's happiness comes from friends or fulfilled ambitions or personal pleasures.
 - None of these are constant for friends fail, worldly ambitions are self-centered and pleasures are in the end, only empty thrills.
4. Jesus speaks of JOY in a different way than worldly joy. (text)
5. Three Expressions of Joy:
 - "...*sorrow shall be turned into Joy...*" is God's way. We try to forget, cover it up, push it back, but cannot substitute one emotion with another. God's truth, God's peace, God's grace convert sorrow. Jesus gave the example of a woman in child-birth, "...*her sorrow and pain turn into joy...*" Then there was the man dying

a dread disease who didn't know about Jesus but turns to Him and accepts Him and finds JOY. Now that's God's kind of JOY.

- "...*your joy no man taketh away from you...*" One cannot keep worldly joy for it flows hot and cold, is on again, off again. Happiness of the world depends on externals such as health, wealth, youth, friends, popularity and praise. The only thing worth having is something stronger than what the world has to offer.
- "...*sources of joy...*" do not spring from human nature or within us. Psychology isn't enough, religion as such isn't enough. JOY comes only from Jesus Christ through PRAYER. Jesus spoke about prayer and said to "...*ask in my name...*" He has told us to ask whatever we will in His name and it will be given. So what have you asked for? Have you ever asked God for JOY?

6. Why don't people express the same JOY in Church services as they do at ball games? Why do so many Christians act like they need to be in a hospital somewhere? There is no JOY!

II. JOYFUL CHRISTIANS ARE FRUITFUL CHRISTIANS

1. Jesus was concerned that His disciples be fruitful. Jesus wants production. Grapevines are not ornaments but are to bear fruit. **The secret of Christian joy is fulfilling the purpose of being a Christian.**
2. What is the purpose of a Christian's life? Primarily the fruit of a Christian is another Christian. When one ceases to reproduce, extinction starts in. Christ-like living, service, giving, loving, teaching and preaching, that's the purpose of a Christian's life.
3. The negative side is **John 15:2**. Ceasing to bear fruit turns one's heart from Jesus and sin comes in. We become useless but as long as we bear some fruit, God can still use us but if we bear no fruit (**John 15:6**) we become withered and are useless. We have a choice as Christians, to bear fruit or be cut off from a vital fellowship with God. Our relationship with God is eternal but our fellowship depends on our "abiding in Christ."
4. The secret of fruit bearing is: abiding, continuing, remaining united with Jesus Christ. We cannot be independent, self-sufficient or self-reliant for without Jesus, we can do nothing.

III. HOW TO HAVE JOY

1. Jesus gave three suggestions: "*If ye abide in me and my words abide in you...*" "*If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love...*" "*Ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you...*" So there it is: Bible study, Obedience and Prayer.
2. Have you ever tried using the Bible and the Bible alone to solve your problems? It's amazing how many Christians have not. Christ's words are sufficient as they speak for themselves.

We need only an attentive, searching mind to find the answers to our questions.

3. Keep Jesus' Commandments. This doesn't mean to be exactly like some other Christian. It means for each of us to find out for our self what Christ commands. Second hand religious clothes will seldom fit anybody else. What God has for somebody else is not what God has for YOU. Allow the Holy Spirit to clothe you with what Jesus wants YOU to have. You must find out for yourself what God's will is for YOUR life.
4. Prayer. Your prayers are dependent upon your attitude and Christ's will and words. Prayer can be a waste of time when using well fitted phrases, good sounding words that do not make up a successful prayer. **Don't play at praying!** Bathe your mind in the life and words of Christ and you will rid yourself of the stuff that blocks the channels of prayer. If you don't study your Bible, you have no assurance of answered prayer.

CONCLUSION:

1. We cannot know God except through His Son, Jesus Christ.
2. Once Jesus is revealed to us and we accept Him, we then abide in Him and He in us by our simply opening our hearts and letting Jesus flood our souls with the JOY of heaven.
3. *"Ask and ye shall receive, that you JOY may be full."*
4. Most Christians are not as "happy" as they should or could be. Are you one of them?
5. JOY comes from bearing fruit for Christ and "fruit" Jesus is talking about is another Christian.
6. Let Jesus give you the JOY He wants you to have.