

Text: Various

Title: The Fruit of the Spirit in Christ - Joy

Time: 8/11/2019 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: In only a few days I am going to have the honor of giving my daughter's hand in marriage to my future son-in-law. A lot of planning has gone into that special moment, and we anticipate a day of great joy. That God would save our kids, provide a godly spouse for them, and give them Christian homes of their own is a prayer I hear repeatedly on Tuesday mornings. Our prayer is soon to be answered in the life of Kara, and that gives me joy.

The day my older son Brandon married his wife Carrie was another day of great joy. You might have guessed otherwise because of all the tears that were flowing from the bride's father and brother and from my son as Carrie was walked down the aisle, but the first thing I explained when the music stopped was that all the tears were actually tears of joy.

Paul tells us emphatically in Galatians 5 that if we walk in the Spirit, we shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. We have said that walking in the Spirit is about time of possession, do-overs, and fruit inspection. We walk in the Spirit when we are under the influence of the truth of God's Word in faith and obedience. We walk in the Spirit when we confess our sins and failures, thankful that we are not under the law's condemnation as a blood-bought people. And we walk in the Spirit as we compare the fruit of our lives to the list of the fruit of the Spirit Paul gives us in verse 22.

Jesus, of course, was the Christ - the one anointed by the Spirit of God to be our mediator - our prophet, priest, and

king. As the Christ, His life bore the fruit of the Spirit flawlessly, and in these series of messages we are looking to that life to understand more perfectly the varieties of fruit on the Spirit's tree. We have seen the fruit of the Spirit called *love* in the life of Christ, and this morning we want to look at the fruit God calls *joy*. We know that the life of Christ is a good place to look for the fruit of the Spirit that is joy because of passages like Heb. 1:9.

We do well to begin this morning by spending a bit of time defining *joy* biblically. To do so, I would begin by noting that, just like love is beyond understanding (Eph. 3:19), joy is "unspeakable" or in some sense indescribable (1 Pet. 1:8). Joy is something we can experience better than we can explain.

The Bible does give us some simple explanations that help us though. Jam. 4:9 teaches that laughter goes with joy like mourning goes with gloom. Joy is the opposite of gloom. Luke 6:23 talks about how joy can cause leaping as well as laughter. And Heb. 13:17 tells us that another opposite of joy is grief. Whereas the works of the flesh in our own life and the lives of others bring us much grief, the fruit of the Spirit is the opposite of that grief. The fruit of the Spirit is joy. I want us to see the three things this morning, which the Bible tells us gave Christ much joy.

I. Christ experienced joy over finding the lost (Luke 15:1-32).

Illustration: We have known the task of praying for lost wallets at New Boston Baptist Church. It is always a joy to find something that we are searching hard for.

Application: One of the differences between the fruit of the Spirit in the life of Christ and the lives of the religious leaders of the apostate Judaism of Christ's day was that Jesus found joy in finding something that He was searching really hard for. Those somethings were the publicans and sinners of verse 1. Have we known this kind of joy, joy over finding someone who is lost? Let me note three things about this joy -

1. The joy is produced over finding just one (v. 7). Our joy in gospel ministry must come from the change we see in just one. We want that joy to multiply among many, but the point is not being many. This joy is a different joy from the joy we might get from seeing our building full every Sunday. This joy rejoices over one at a time.

2. The joy is produced over finding repentance (v. 7). The problem with very many lost people is that they see themselves as just, not needing any repentance. Lost people are found through repentance. Even we as believers grow in grace through repentance and confession of sin. The humble willingness to repent of our unbelief and sin and to trust Christ for salvation brings great joy in heaven. Jesus felt this joy when he found one who repented.

3. The joy produced is normal (v. 32). The priorities of the Pharisees seem to be the point of the older brother in this parable. The joy Christ speaks of here was not a normal part of their lives. Instead, they were disgusted that Jesus would receive sinners and eat with them (v. 2).

We may not share their disgust this morning, but when have we last received sinners and eaten with them? When have we last experienced the joy we read about here? Jesus searched for the joy that comes from finding the lost. We

can be so overburdened, distracted, or entertained with other things that we forget the father's wise counsel: "It was meet [or normal] that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Is it normal for our local church, for each of us as disciple-makers, to make merry and be glad this way? Is this joy something we want to experience as a normal part of our lives?

II. Christ experienced joy over obedience to God's Word (Mark 7:31-35).

Application: In many ways this account of the healing of the deaf man seems similar to the other accounts of His miraculous healing ministry. I want us to notice one unique difference here, however. Did you notice that Jesus sighed before healing the man's ears (v. 34)? That word *sighed* is the same word we saw as the opposite of joy in Heb. 13:17, where it is translated *grief*. We are told that in this case, Jesus experienced grief rather than joy while healing this man.

What explains this lack of joy? I believe the next two verses explain it (vv. 36-37). Evidently, Jesus sighed while healing the man because He knew that those beholding the miracle were not going to listen to His charge to keep quiet about it. Great grief must have been caused by anticipating what we read here: "the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they" disobeyed that charge. Disobedience causes Jesus to sigh with grief, just like it grieves the Holy Spirit.

But just like the disobedience of His disciples caused Him grief, so great joy was a part of His life because of obedience to the Word of God (John 15:11). Notice three things about the joy Jesus describes in this verse.

1. It was a joy that would come from responding correctly to what Jesus spoke. In verse 10 He calls what He is saying "My commandments." The correct response to commandments is loving obedience. The joy that is the fruit of the Spirit is a joy that depends on obeying God's Word. Grief comes from disobedience to God's Word.

2. It was a joy that Jesus Himself experienced. He calls it "My joy." We know from Hebrews that Jesus learned obedience through the things that He suffered. His life was a sinless life, because He flawlessly obeyed the Word of God. That obedience was an experience of great joy for Him.

3. It was a joy that Jesus wants us to experience in full. Full obedience brings fullness of joy. Partial obedience brings part joy and part grief.

Illustration: One evening at a D. L. Moody evangelistic meeting in Brockton, MA, the congregation paused to share testimonies. One young man, whose name is not remembered by history, stood up and said of his soul's condition: "I am not quite sure [that I will be ultimately saved], but I am going to trust, and I am going to obey." The song leader for the meeting was impressed with those words, wrote them down, and shared them with a friend who ultimately wrote the song we like to sing in our hymnal, "Trust and Obey." That song has blessed millions since that young man uttered his simple testimony. It is wonderful how the Lord uses simple little things in great ways.

Application: I think there is great joy to be had in our willingness to tell the Lord, "I am not quite sure, but I am going to trust, and I am going to obey." The song has it correct: "Trust and obey, for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey." It is that simple. Do we know this joy in full?

III. Christ experienced joy from believing in the resurrection (Acts 2:25-36).

Application: Peter declared to the Pentecost crowd that the *I* and *my* of Psalm 16 was not King David, but David's promised Son, Jesus Christ. Notice the gladness (v. 26) and the joy (v. 28). What is the reason for this joy in the promised Messiah? Verse 27: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Jesus was able to endure the pressures of Gethsemane and the sufferings of Calvary in part because the promise of His resurrection gave Him powerful joy.

Illustration: Last month Rosie Ruiz died of cancer at 66 years of age. Rosie's Florida obituary made headlines here because she was the infamous winner of the 1980 Boston Marathon who was later exposed as having cheated the race. She was stripped of her title and became what the news media last week called "an enduring symbol of cheating in sports." In the end, Rosie could not win the race of life by cheating. Tragically, there is no cheating cancer; no cheating death.

Application: Unless, of course, you happen to be a Christian, a follower of the risen Christ!

We have seen in Peter's Pentecost sermon that Jesus Christ had great joy, not because He cheated death, but because He conquered it fair and square. We also read of the joy of Psalm 16 in Heb. 12:1-3, where we find the metaphor of a race, and there we see that this joy of faith in the resurrection is a joy that we need to adopt as our own in the face a race of difficulty and suffering. We must run with patience the race set before us looking to Jesus and His joy.

Jesus exchanged, and He did so with joy, the need to endure the cross for the triumph of sitting down victorious over death at the right hand of His Father's throne. There He ever lives to make intercession for us. We need to remember our coming resurrection and let it give us powerful joy to run with patience the race that the Lord has set before us. Let's not cheat the race with shortcuts and diversions. Faithfulness will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Conclusion: Where are we looking for our joy this morning? Jesus Christ bore the fruit of the Spirit, which includes joy. Finding the lost, obeying God's Word, and believing the promise of His resurrection gave Him great joy. Is this where we are looking for our joy?

If not, we need to confess that to the Lord and learn to walk in the Spirit again that we might see Him produce this fruit in us. Remember the great joy that the repentance of one sinner gives the Lord, more than 99 who need no repentance. If we have been looking in the wrong places for joy, our repentance can give Him that joy even this morning.

On the other hand, if we can honestly say that this is the joy we have been seeking, I want to encourage us with one more passage about the joy of Christ as we close this morning: Matt. 25:19-23.

As Spirit-empowered slaves of the Spirit-anointed Christ, we shall come to the day when we hear His, "Well done," and then enter into the joy of our lord. In that day, our joy shall be full.

“A man came – I think it was actually in Philadelphia – on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction – the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

– David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

Preachers and Preaching