

THE GREAT PRICE OF INEXPRESSIBLE JOY

I. 1 Peter 1:3-9

A. Our messages on Joy began several weeks ago...

- 1) We talked about two sad travelers headed home from Jerusalem who encountered a stranger--Jesus--and when they realized who was breaking the bread at their table, they were filled with joy as they raced back to Jerusalem to tell His disciples...
- 2) We read about Jesus at the Last Supper in John 16 and these words to His disciples: *"Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy."*
- 3) We talked about Hannah on Mother's Day, a woman who was barren but who desperately wanted to be a Mom. In her pain, she cried out to God. Then her grief was turned to joy when her firstborn Samuel was born... He became a great prophet...
- 4) Then we explored the lives of two wealthy seekers. One was the rich young ruler and the other was Zacchaeus. Both had close encounters with Jesus but only one responded with repentance and inexpressible joy...
- 5) And this past Sunday we went back to the Last Supper, this time in John 15 where Jesus said this: *"As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you keep My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."*

B. Share sermon excerpt from John Piper, "Getting to the Bottom of Our Joy."

C. 1 Peter 1:3-9 take us to the Table of our Lord: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. Though 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, for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

- 1) We all need assurance of our blood-bought residence in heaven. We may think the more mature in the Lord we become, the less we need such assurances, but often we need them more because as we mature, the more we realize how great our sin, how inadequate our own righteousness, and therefore we realize how desperately we truly need a Savior.
- 2) If you never suffer the grief of trials, or go through pain and suffering, or face difficult ordeals—you're an anomaly, a riddle wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma.

D. Inexpressible Joy has come to us through great pain and price, the sacrifice of God the Son--the Lamb of God who was slain, whose blood was shed upon the cross. The Bread and Cup remind us of the cost and the prize, what was yielded up for our gain, what suffering was necessary to win for us eternal Treasure.

* Pray and serve Communion...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

1 Peter 1:3-9 (NIV)

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, **5** who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. **6** In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. **7** These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. **8** Though 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, **9** for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

Sermon Excerpt on Joy by John Piper

<http://www.desiringgod.org/conference-messages/getting-to-the-bottom-of-your-joy>

I want God to be the bottom of your joy and self to move out of that position. That's what I'm after in asking that question.

Let me clarify what I mean by the bottom of your joy, why am I using that word, what do I have in mind, what's the picture? I have a picture in my mind and I hope you can keep it in yours once I give it to you.

All of our joys have a foundation, except one. So any happiness that you have in something has a foundation, except one, the one that has no foundation, that's the bottom.

Let me give you an example. You make an A on a test, it makes you very happy. That's understandable, I think that's good. And somebody asks you, I ask you, why are you happy about making an A on a test? Who cares? Why are you happy about making an A on the test?

And you say, well because, it could be a lot of answers, it'll make mom and dad happy, or I love the praise of my teachers, or you might say, it's decisive, it's going to be key in getting into graduate school in psychology, you might say that. That's a step down now. Here was a test, you made an A, got happy, that made you happy.

But if someone asks you why, then underneath it is, it's going to get me into graduate school. So I'm going to ask you, why does getting into graduate school make you happy? And you would say, perhaps, because I've always had the dream of being a clinical psychologist and I can't be one unless I go to graduate school in psychology, so that's why the A leading to the graduate school makes me happy, because then I can be what I've dreamed about being.

And then I would ask you, take it down a level, why do you want to be a clinical psychologist, why does that make you happy? Why does this happiness, why is it such a feeder happiness? It's up through all these things and you might say, because I have had some experience with my mom and dad we got a lot of help and I would love to help people, it makes me happy to think about the possibility of helping people by knowing them that way and giving God's perspective on how their mind works, and their emotions work and their relationships work, that would make me happy.

So now we're down about four levels. And then I would ask, why does making people happy or helped make you happy? Now, we're very close to the bottom, aren't we? And the bottom is where there aren't any more answers, you're just at the bottom. And where you end up as you penetrate down in your life, to the bottom of what makes you happy is who you are. And there are two possibilities down there. Making much of you, or making much of God.

- John Piper, "Getting to the Bottom of Our Joy" Passion 2011 Conference, January 3, 2011, Atlanta, GA.

Edifying Video Clips

Getting to the Bottom of Joy - John Piper

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gy7EH9t0JcM>

"Joy Unspeakable" by Mandisa

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jdA03BLdYr0>

"Joy" by Rend Collective Experiment

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDiETOLBvxA>

"Joy is the Flag Flown High From the Castle of My Heart (Dueling Ukuleles)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXHmca5VXAM>

Longview Texas - Bird's Eye View

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AE5uRsviM8q>

LeTourneau University - Longview, Texas

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vME392cZplo>

Bonus Stuff

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.

Quote by William Barclay

"If Christianity does not make a man happy, it will not make him anything at all... Christianity is the faith of the happy heart and the shining face."

- William Barclay, Christian Herald, November 1964, p. 64.

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"God can't give us happiness and peace apart from Himself because there is no such thing."

Quote by John Piper

"If you live gladly to make others glad in God, your life will be hard, your risks will be high, and your joy will be full."

Quote by Patrick Henry

"There is just one more thing I wish I could give you. It is the religion of our Lord Jesus Christ. With it, if you had nothing else, you could be happy. Without it, though you had all things else, you could not be happy."

Quote by Arnold G. Kuntz

"The plain fact is we aren't made for a sense of well-being that rises or falls with what we can get our hands on. We are made for whatever God brings to pass out of the hard soil of struggle, out of the creative effort of our souls."

- Arnold Kuntz, Lutheran Witness, November 3, 1974, p. 6.

Quote by A.B. Simpson

"Begin to rejoice in the Lord, and your bones will flourish like an herb, and your cheeks will glow with the bloom of health and freshness. Worry, fear, distrust, care-all are poisonous! Joy is balm and healing, and if you will but rejoice, God will give power."