

Introduction

Over the last few weeks we've been looking at what the kingdom of God is through Roman's 14:17:

Scripture

- **Roman's 14:17:**

¹⁷ "For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit", what the kingdom of God is.

We've been looking at:

1. Righteousness (a state that makes a person acceptable to God), pardon of sin, holiness of heart and life
2. Peace in the soul, from a sense of God's mercy, peace regulating, ruling and harmonizing the heart

For us to be truly ministers of the Kingdom, and to move in the supernatural power of God, we must come to an understanding of our place with the Father, which is righteousness, and out of righteousness we have a peace in our hearts.

We are not tossed to and fro by our emotions, what we see or by people's opinions or our failures because we are grounded and rooted in Him.

Now we will look at Joy.

Joy is solid, spiritual happiness.

Joy is a happiness imparted into the soul by the Holy Spirit and maintained there by the same influence of the Holy Spirit.

So there is genuine counterpart of heaven, righteousness without sin, peace without inward disturbance, and joy without any kind of mental agony or distressing fear.

We should not allow outside influences to steal our joy or to affect us, because we must become people to draw from and rely on the Kingdom within us.

JOY (greek): Chara means cheerfulness, calm delight, gladness

So Paul is really writing in this scripture that out of righteousness comes peace and out of peace comes joy.

Not an emotional joy but a joy deep down inside us which cannot be taken away by circumstances.

The joy that we have in understanding our righteousness is lodged deep inside our hearts and is not related to our personal circumstances.

The early Christians found joy in the midst of persecution and sufferings because this joy is deposited in us when we become born again.

If we have a look at this joy that Jesus had, that he endured the cross and all its sufferings because of you and I.

Scripture

- **Hebrews 12:2**

Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus, Who is the Leader and the Source of our faith [giving the first incentive for our belief] and is also its Finisher [bringing it to maturity and perfection]. He, for the joy [of obtaining the prize] that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising and ignoring the shame, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

1. We need to not be distracted by what is around us or circumstances, but be focused on Jesus who is the source and author of our faith.
2. He will bring to maturity and perfect our faith. He will finish what He started in us as we continue to look to Him.
3. There is joy in looking ahead knowing that by enduring, we will also obtain the prize if we don't give up or look back.
4. We are not to focus on the pain, or shame of the circumstance, but ignore and despise it, as Jesus did to obtain the prize, which brings joy.
5. As Jesus is seated at the right hand of God, we are seated with Him in heavenly places. We have access to the Father and, we like Jesus, now occupy a special place in the Kingdom of God.

Joy was a by-product of enduring and obtaining the prize. Just like when we train for a race, we need to press through the pain for a season and endure to see the joy of obtaining and completing the task ahead of us.

If our attitude towards ministry is joy and peace we will bring joy and peace to those who we minister to.

Serving Jesus is not a burden but it's a joy. If Jesus had a joy serving His Father, how much more should it be a joy for us to minister for Him. We have a prize at the end of this journey, which is to spend eternity with Him.

But we also have a prize along the journey. Paul said in Phillipians 3:14:

Scripture

- **Phillipians 3:14**

"I press on towards the prize".

The word prize means "umpire". So as I build a relationship and understand righteousness I become an umpire.

An umpire has authority. We have authority to blow the whistle as an umpire does.

So when we understand who we are and what he has given us, we become enforcers of the completed work of Jesus Christ, which brings joy to our walk with God.

Scripture

- **Matthew 11:30** (Amp)

For My yoke is wholesome (useful, good--not harsh, hard, sharp, or pressing, but comfortable, gracious, and pleasant), and My burden is light and easy to be borne.

Jesus said my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

You hear a lot about people saying how much they suffer for Jesus, how hard it is to minister, the price we have to pay, all those things are valid, but what an awesome joy it is to see people saved, delivered, healed, and walk with God. The joy we get from doing that truly outweighs all the other.

Jesus says my yoke is whole-some which is:

1. Useful
2. Good
3. Comfortable
4. Gracious
5. Pleasant
6. And His burden is light and easy

So when we are yoked to Jesus and not yoked to performance or just an atmosphere, but we are yoked to His righteousness and His Presence.

This brings Joy because we have to come to a realization that results are not our problem.

We are only a vessel for Him to work through. He has equipped us with every good thing, blessed us in heavenly realms.

So for me to become a true kingdom minister, I should not be struggling, seeking the approval of man but seeking to be evenly yoked to Christ.

Scripture

- **Matthew 6:33**

But seek (^[a]aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (^[b]His way of doing and being right), and then all these things ^[c]taken together will be given you besides.

There was a song called “he ain’t heavy..he’s my brother”, so when we come up with this religious saying about “having a burden” for someone and its heavy on my heart, any burden we have should be light, easy to bear according to scripture.

The only reason things are heavy are when we aren’t trusting in, or relying on, Jesus.

It’s quite simple to look at this, that when Jesus told Peter to put out his net for a catch and Peter’s response is “we’ve worked hard all day and caught nothing”, but out of their obedience, in obeying the word, that Jesus had spoken, they caught such a large number of fish which resulted in great joy.

Scripture

- **Luke 5:6-10** (NIV)

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signalled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees and said, “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon’s

partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."

Let's look at the results of Peter's Obedience:

1. They caught a large number of fish
2. The nets began to break
3. They had a spirit of giving, they called their partners
4. They filled both boats, Spirit of Unity. When we are obedient to the word of God and Jesus is in our boat, how can there be disunity amongst the brethren? How can Jesus dislike the Jesus in the other person?
5. Peter came to repentance, fell on his knees
6. Peter saw his lack
7. It brought astonishment to all who saw it
8. Resulted in Peter's calling

Could you imagine a fishing village catching no fish? There wouldn't have been much joy.

But when Jesus came on the scene, all of a sudden we see great joy brought to this village because of the incredible catch.

So His burden was light. And His yoke was easy. They just needed to obey the word, and the result was God's.

This kind of joy is distinct from mere happiness. The joy the Holy Spirit gives us, is possible even in the midst of great sorrow.

Next week we will be continuing our study on joy.