

Joy Flows from Christ's Spirit

Galatians 5:16; 22-25

4/26/26

Where in your life do you need to invite Christ's Spirit to reshape your reactions? Reactions are just that, reactions. But Jesus teaches us to live intentionally and not to react. Think of the Sermon on the Mount-Matthew 5-7- Jesus' whole sermon revolves around building habits of intentional living. Today, I want to talk about how joy flows from living Jesus' intentional Way.

Where do I need to invite Christ's Spirit to reshape my reactions? A few months back, I was doing a home repair. I took off Thursday and Friday to complete the project and scheduled to pick up a machine at a big box store. I had everything I needed for the job except the machine. I entered the rental store and said, "I'm here to pick up the machine." "You didn't get the email?" "What email?" "Your reservation has been canceled." "What?" "The trailer hitch is broken, and you can't tow it." "But I need this machine. I have everything lined up and the next two days off. Can I rent the bigger machine?" "No. Its broken." Another guy yells, "No, it was fixed." "I'll take it." "Here is the key, see if it will start." I run out. Put in the key. Nothing. Make sure I have all the safety features engaged. Nothing. I run back in. "It doesn't start. "Well, let me see if that hitch is still broken." He and I walked out. We fixed the hitch. Got my truck all lined up. Hooked up my truck. Went back in to sign the papers after about two hours. They couldn't find the keys! I was devastated. My hard worked plans: ruined. I took a step back. Took a breath. Looked at the two guys and said, "If this is the worst thing that happens to me today, I'll be OK." "What do you do?"

That wasn't always my reaction. I'm still very much a work in progress. But that's Ok as we read

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 & Romans 8:26-27

Do you ever feel restless? Or do you want something more? If it is something more, you are not alone. I was working outside the other day listening to a podcast getting lost in my work and before I knew it, the *Joe Rogan Experience* popped on. He was interviewing Mark Zuckerberg. These guys are restless. Both searching for something more. You would think a tech billionaire would be content, but you know what they say, "The thing those with money want the most is... more money!" Both guys are a part of the "Manosphere." More on that in a minute. Augustine says, "Our hearts are restless, until they rest in God." I would say it a different way, "Jesus teaches us the Way to experience joy."

I preached last week how wonderful it would be if we had clarity and control of our futures, but the deception is that we believe we will be at rest, at peace, once we achieve clarity and control. But we know that is a lie. Rest is a part of Jesus' peace but it's not the whole thing. Peace is working with Christ's Spirit for human flourishing. And when we practice Jesus' Way of pursuing peace, we will experience joy. If we are pursuing control, and not human flourishing, we will not have peace.

Has anyone heard that there seems to be a rise of young men attending both the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches? I'm still not convinced this is happening, but if it is, in my humble opinion it has less to do with Jesus and much more to do with social media and the "Manosphere." In some of these circles, Vladimir Putin and other dictators are seen as the ideal Christian man. Emphasis on man. They are not pursuing the fruit of the Spirit buy raw power cloaked as Christian. Other articles suggest that young men are attracted to the disciplines of the traditions. I pray this is true. We know Christians to

see them: if they are following Christ, then God's Word tells us the end result—the fruit of the Spirit: joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, self-control.

Joy flows from working with Jesus Christ for human flourishing. Joy is learning and practicing the Way of Christ. A disciplined intentional living with Jesus produces joy. Jesus' Way is intentional to make all things new.

Change is at the core of Christianity. Jesus desires to change our hearts and minds to then change the society around us to accomplish human flourishing. God's Word tells us the result of following Jesus' Way: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, self-control.

The beginning of Jesus' Way is that we are all created in the image of God. We are all worth saving, even our enemies, even those who differ from us. We live in a complex divided world, but the early Church was born into a complex divided world.

Christ's Spirit intends to create a new kind of community across differences with the purpose to love God and then neighbor. What better purpose to have in life? To love God then neighbor. That can unite all, even those who don't believe in God, because the goal is human flourishing. And the best way to invite those who don't follow Christ to follow Christ is to work for human flourishing. To demonstrate our new way of life found in Jesus Christ: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, generosity, self-control.

Finally, Jesus teaches us that He lives to live in us. God's Word teaches that we are the Temples of the Holy Spirit; thus, intentional living. We care for our bodies by praying, then eating a nutritious breakfast, brushing teeth, stretching, showering, whatever work we do for the glory of God and the betterment of humanity, enjoying family and friends, praying, then the next day living with Christ's Spirit pursuing intentional living. When we bring our children to worship, we instill intentional living. To create the habit of reminding them they are children of God and teaching them to love God and neighbor.

Where in your life do you need to invite Christ's Spirit to reshape your reactions?

Theme: Joy is intentional living.

Sermon Notes:

1. Joy is learning and practicing the Way of Christ.
2. Christ's Spirit creates a new kind of community across differences.
3. Joy becomes visible in how we speak, listen, and love.
4. The early church lived with courage and joy in a complex, divided world.
5. Where do I need to invite the Spirit to reshape my reactions?
6. How can I embody joy in conversations that usually create tension?