



Joy That Is Grounded With Roots

Paster Cody Schwanger

“Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.” James 1:2-4

As you may well have hopefully picked up on, we as a congregation have decided to focus this year on Joy. This is an interesting word, because we often, myself included, will separate happiness from Joy. We say things like “well, happiness is an emotion that comes and goes, but joy does not”.



I understand why we say this sort of phrasing, I believe we are trying to convey something true, that is, that we should be able to see God’s hand and blessings in all things. In so doing we find joy in those foundational truths. Nevertheless, happiness and joy are not really distinct from each other. Both are emotions and both can be moved up and down depending on the day, let us at least be able to say that.

The truth is that there is really no distinction in the Bible between joy and happiness. In many ways, they can be interchangeable. There is such a thing as happiness that is based on circumstances, but it is equally true to say that there is eternal happiness as well. So we begin to unpack what “Joy” is by understanding as one writer notes that:

Worship Times

Sunday School

9:00 AM

Worship Service

10:10 AM

“There are different types of joy and happiness. There is a joy that comes from the world, such as “the fleeting pleasures of sin” spoken of in Hebrews 11:25. There is a joy that is part of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). There is a temporary happiness and an eternal happiness, but we can call both “happiness.” We don’t need to split hairs between the meaning of joy and happiness. We just need to decide where our joy comes from. Are we happy in the Lord, or are we content with the happiness the world affords?”

“You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is **fullness of joy**”

Psalm 16:11

We just need to decide where our Joy comes from. That’s exactly right! When you read James 1:2-4, the complexity and beauty of Joy becomes apparent. Joy in trials? If this wasn’t in the Bible, we’d say that’s absurd. But it is in the text in our beloved scriptures, so what do we do with Joy or rather where do we ground our Joy to. This makes me think of the following story:

One winter morning a man arrived early at a small diner just off the highway. It was the kind of place where the booths were worn smooth from years of use and the coffee was always strong. He had come there many times before work, but this morning something caught his attention.

At the counter sat an older woman speaking with the waitress. The two of them seemed to know each other well. They laughed easily, and the woman kept thanking the waitress for the coffee as though it were a special kindness rather than something she had paid for.

After a while the waitress leaned toward her and said quietly, “You seem in good spirits today.” The woman smiled and stirred her coffee slowly. “Well,” she said, “I figured I had two choices this morning.” “What do you mean?” the waitress asked.

“My husband passed away last month. Forty-two years together. The house is very quiet now.” The waitress paused, unsure what to say. The woman continued, still looking into her coffee. “I could spend every morning thinking about what I’ve lost... or I can thank the Lord for the forty-two years He gave us.”

She took a sip, then added almost casually, “Either way the house is still quiet. But gratitude makes the quiet a little easier to live with.” The waitress nodded slowly. The woman finished her coffee, paid her bill, and walked out into the cold morning like it was any other day.

Based largely on a study by Harvard and supported by a myriad of other sources suggest that happiness and we might say joy are correlated to gratitude stating that , “Gratitude is strongly linked to increased happiness by shifting focus from negativity to appreciation, triggering neurotransmitters like serotonin and dopamine. Regularly practicing gratitude improves mental health, strengthens relationships, reduces stress, and fosters lasting positive emotions. Studies show it can boost life satisfaction and reduce anxiety.”

The point here is that Joy is grounded and therefore rooted to something, and the studies show gratitude is that thing. My suggestion to you though, is that gratitude is one step away from what you and I choose to root ourselves to. And it is why we can find joy even in trials, when circumstances might suggest depression, anger, frustration and confusion. We find Joy through a lens that sees Christ only. Christ is our firm foundation.

In the studies that show gratitude correlates with happiness what is mostly cited is that gratitude shifts our minds from the negative to see the positives. By nature this changes our outlook. This is certainly true, but where does your gratitude stem from. Were it not for a God, who loves and cares for you, who is all-powerful, and all-knowing and holds you in his hand means that when our circumstances turn for the worse, we can proclaim first, that God has it in control. Second, if God has it, then we got it.

If is for this reason that Job looking back on his horrible circumstances of losing his wealth, family and health was able to proclaim that things which had happened to him though he did not understand them were to wonderful for him to know. Attitude is everything, and our attitude is shaped by a God that loves you, loves you enough to die for you.

So then, Joy becomes a natural state of being for the faithful Christian, for we have much to be thankful for. God is good all the time. Let us never forget it, especially as we begin this time of year to shift our hearts towards the Easter season when we set time aside to remember the cross and the empty tomb. So be joyful brothers and sisters, this life we have is good. Amen

CHURCH HISTORY

50 years Ago:

1. The Mohler Congregation met in their regular council meeting on Tuesday, March 23rd, 1976 at 7:30 pm. with Moderator Walter Hackman, Sr. presiding. Brother Wilbur Kreider led the devotional period by reading Acts 2:32-47.
2. The ballot for elections of members to the offices and commissions of the church was accepted by the congregation. The results were as follows: Church Clerk – Linda Gehr, Financial Secretary – Kathy Ressler, Church Board – Irvin Graybill, Mark Martzall, and John Weaver, Nominating Committee – Sandy Glick and Milton Shaub, Ministry and Evangelism Commission – Tom Noll and John Weaver, Music and Worship Commission – Ruth Kreider and Sue Mackley.
3. The congregation passed the seconded motion by raising of hands to establish a committee to look into the need of having a pastor and what duties he would perform. A committee of three members will be appointed by the Nominating Committee and Moderator to look into the matter and give a report at the next council meeting.
4. Voting on the query of baptism took place and the results were as follows: A. To accept all forms of baptism – YES – 10 NO – 40 B. To accept only believers baptism – YES – 19 NO – 41. The current church policy of accepting only baptism by triune immersion will remain as it now stands.

75 years ago:

1. Springville Congregation assembled in regular council March 27th, 1951 at 7:30 pm. at the Mohler House with Elder John L. Myer presiding. Elder Amos Heisey conducted the opening devotions by using hymn No. 127 and reading Acts 15:6-15 followed by prayer.
2. The church decided to have a loud speaker system installed in the Mohler House at a cost of approximately \$610.00. A member of the congregation agreed (volunteered) to pay 1/3 of the cost.
3. A request to decrease our giving to Elizabethtown College. A motion passed to continue as at present and strive to increase our giving.
4. A request to have church bulletins again. The church decided against using bulletins at present.
5. A request to have all services during 4 winter months at Mohler House. Not granted.
6. Shall erring members appear before the Official Board to confess their fault and ask forgiveness or shall they appear before the Church. The church decided to give individual members the privilege of appearing before the Board or the Church.
7. Brother Perry Liskey conducted a revival meeting at the Cocalico House, March 4th to March 18th which resulted in bringing the following persons to Christ: Eugene Eckenrode, Samuel Eshleman, Rosetta Gehman, Donald Graybill, Esther Hartman, Anna Keller, Ruth Keller, Naomi Keller, Roy Hurst, Norman Leininger, Jr., Dorothy Rudy, Albert Sweigart and wife Elizabeth and Dorothy Sweigart, Earl Spade and Laverne Wenger.

100 years ago:

1. Springville Congregation met for council in the Mohler House this 20th day of March, 1926 with Elder I.W. Taylor presiding, who opened the meeting with song No. 450 and read the first 12 verses of the sixth chapter of Hebrews followed by prayer.
2. Trustees of the Mohler House reported that the light which was to be placed in the toilet has not been placed yet.
3. In order to more clearly find as to whether Brother William Keller owes anything to the Reddig Estate, the church decided that a committee of three be appointed to investigate. Decided one brother to be appointed by the church, one by Brother Keller and these two brethren appoint the third. Brother Rufus Royer was appointed by the church.

4. The following certificates were granted: Harry Keller and wife Lydia, Norine Keller, Ira Hertzog and wife Mamie, Jennie Myers, Joseph Balmer and wife Emma.
5. Brother John Martzall asked the church to be excused from his office as church treasurer. The church granted his wish. (John Martzall served as treasurer from 1921 to 1926.)
6. Brother Rufus Royer was appointed as church treasurer in Brother John Martzall's stead. (Rufus Royer served as treasurer from 1926 to 1948.)
7. Owing to the complaint of smoke in the Mohler House due to the burning of wood will be stopped.
8. Complaint was made as to some of our meeting houses being poorly heated. The church decided that a wood to the wise is sufficient.
9. A query asking is it right to go to banquets and shows. The church decided we should avoid them.
10. An election was held to elect one Brother as delegate to Annual Meeting which resulted as follows: J. Bitzer Johns. Alternate: Isaac Wenger.
11. Election held for delegates to District Meeting resulted as follows: Evan Dinger, Israel Mohler and Rufus Royer. Alternates: J. Bitzer Johns, Jacob Leininger and John Martzall.

125 years ago:

1. Council opened April 4th, 1901 at 9:30 am with Elder Israel Wenger presiding, assisted by Elder John Herr.
2. Sister Katie Lutz was given five weeks' time to appear before the church to answer to the charge of attending a band fair. Brothers Isaac Keller and Bitzer Johns to visit her.
3. Members were admonished not to attend Love Feast in another district and neglect attending the Love Feast in their own district.
4. Decided not to pay out of the treasury for washing and cleaning our meeting houses, but to continue our established way of each community cleaning its own house.
5. The certificates of Abram Royer and wife were accepted. (Abram Royer was elected to the ministry in the Conestoga congregation in 1897 and moved into the Springville District.)
6. It was decided by private vote that Brother Abram Royer shall sit above Brother Henry Royer. (Henry Royer was elected to the ministry at Springville in 1896. Age and experience commanded respect. Ministers and deacons sat together and where they sat was determined by length of service. Apparently in this instance there were other factors in addition to their date of election to the ministry that determined Abram Royer's seniority over Henry Royer.)
7. A Love Feast was appointed for May 22nd and 23rd, 1901 to commence at 9:30 am.

Yarn, yarn, yarn — it starts as a simple strand and turns into something warm, useful, and full of personality. Skeins stacked in bins and counters, colors spilling over like a rainbow you can touch. Soft neutrals, bold brights, chunky textures, silky threads — each one holding possibility. The quiet click of needles, the steady rhythm of a hook, hands moving almost without thinking while conversations flow and worries slow down. A square made over and over becomes a blanket for someone in need. Yarn isn't just fiber — it's comfort, creativity, and a little bit of magic all wound into a ball. And that's the beautiful thing about creating: you take something simple and, stitch by stitch, turn it into a story. Every loop holds a moment, every row shows patience, every finished piece says, *"I made this for you."* Creating isn't about perfection — it's about joy, expression, and the quiet pride of bringing something into the world with your own two hands.

STAYED TUNE FOR
THE NEXT
BEACON NEWSLETTER
TO READ ABOUT
THE EXCITING MINISTRY
THE WOMEN OF THE MOHLER CHURCH
ARE CREATING
USING *YARN*



WINTER IN THE 1950's

Winter in the 1950's felt slower, quieter, and close-knit. Mornings began with frost tracing lace across the windows and the low hum of a furnace working hard against the cold. Kids bundled into wool coats, mittens clipped to sleeves, and boots that took forever to lace, then hurried outside to crunch across snowy sidewalks or race toward hills with wooden sleds. Inside, kitchens smelled like soup simmering on the stove and something baking “just because,” while the radio played in the background and damp gloves dried near the register. Evenings gathered everyone into the living room — board games on the coffee table, homework at the kitchen table, maybe a black-and-white show flickering on TV — the kind of winter where warmth came as much from togetherness as from the heat.

1954 - the year I was born! Lots of snow and high mounds for climbing, sliding and just enjoying. School buses on the road with the sound of chains. Cars stuck in the ditch and tractor and chain used to pull them out and get them on their way. Extra covers at night to keep warm since upstairs were typically not heated. Time to read, play games, crack walnuts in the adjoining wash house, put puzzles together, hot chocolate made on top of stove, and forever looking out the window to see what was happening. Those were the days when the word “Boredom” was not used and we had fun no matter what. As a lover of snow, this past winter made me reflect on “*the good old days*”. Seasons come and seasons go - that’s why I like living in Pennsylvania. ~ jm

