



Summer

AT LIFEPOINT

WEEK OF JULY 2ND, 2023
CHOOSE JOY

Speaker: Pastor Jordan Smalley



icebreaker

Time to debate: What's the best BBQ food? Be ready to support your argument.

Introduction

- Pastor Jordan explained that happiness is when good things happen in our lives, but joy is a calm assurance that God is in control when life feels out of control. What was something that made you feel happiness that you believed to be joy? How long did that last?
- In your life, what does fighting to choose joy look like?
- Do you feel like you get caught up in the pursuit of happiness, or looking for joy based on external circumstances? Why or why not?

True and Lasting Joy Can Only be Found in Jesus

- Pastor Jordan shared the quote, "Some of us lack true and lasting joy in our lives today because we're looking for it in a place that was never intended to give it to us!" Where have you looked for joy?
- In what ways do you find yourself having the WHEN/THEN mindset? Do you approach your Christian walk with the same mindset?
- Share a time in your life where your joy left. When did you realize what you were doing wasn't working anymore and it wasn't enough?

We Can Choose to Walk in Joy

- Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy (James 1:2 NLT). Share an example of when you had to choose joy in a challenging situation.
- The word "consider" in this text means to lead, rule, take authority over, decide, govern, or to become the chief spokesman of your situation. What would this look like in your life?

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- How do you find yourself allowing the things around you to compromise or steal your joy?
- Choosing joy isn't ignoring what's happening, but it's choosing to have a different perspective. Share some different perspectives you've use to choose joy rather than just ignoring the situation.

We Can Cultivate a Life of Joy

Habits of a Joyful Person:

- Spending regular time alone in God's presence (Psalm 16:11 NIV; Nehemiah 8:10 GNT)
- Complain LESS and REJOICE MORE (Psalms 118:24 NLT)
- Have an attitude of gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
- Focus on the future (Proverbs 10:28; Philippians 3:13)
- Serve others ("Your greatest joy definitely comes from doing something for another, especially when it was done with no thought of something in return." - John Wooden)
- Be in community with believers (Small group)
 - How are you doing with spending regular time with God? In seasons of difficulty, do you adjust the time you spend with God? Explain.
 - What are some of your indicators that your joy is doing great? What are some warning signs that your joy is running low?
 - What does rejoicing look like in your life?
 - What does focusing on the future look like in your Christian walk?
 - How can letting go of yourself and focusing on others help build your joy?
 - How has your small group helped your joy? How does it compare to the other relationships in your life?

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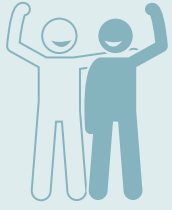
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God Can Restore Your Joy

- Psalm 51:12 (NLT) reads, "Restore to me the joy of your salvation."
 - Small group HOSTS: Take this moment and enter into a time of prayer with your group. We've all been through so much in these last few years. We encourage you to take some time and pray over the needs of your group. Ask your small group members what is stealing their joy right now. Where do they need to be reminded that God is in control, no matter what? Pray for the Lord to restore and strengthen their joy.
- Pray over anyone that needs to fully surrender to God.
 - Pray that they believe in Jesus, that He died for them and rose again. Pray for them to surrender to the Lord, to repent, and to turn to God. Pray for them to believe that they are forgiven and redeemed and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And pray that they become filled with the joy that only comes from knowing Jesus.

act on it



ENCOURAGE

Our joy isn't based on our external circumstances. It comes from our settled confidence and calm assurance that God is in control. True and lasting joy can only be found in Christ Jesus. Joy found anywhere else will always leave us unfulfilled. We can choose to walk in faith, knowing that God will prevail. As Pastor Jordan said, we can't always control what happens to us externally but we can choose our response internally. Not only can we choose to walk in joy, we can choose to cultivate a life of joy. And if your joy is lacking, let the God who created and gives joy restore it and you.



ASK

Where are you currently finding your joy? If your joy is lacking, could it possibly be related to your closeness with God? What practical steps can you take this week that will bring you closer to cultivating a life of joy? Is there anyone in your life seeking true and lasting joy in the wrong places? How can you help him/her out?



CHALLENGE

Bring God more into your week more this week, whether that's spending extra time in prayer or adding a few more minutes of bible reading into your schedule. Make your praise list longer than your complaint list. Do something joyful for someone. Reach out to someone from the small group and have them pray over you. One way to find joy, as Pastor Jordan mentioned, is to serve others. As a small group, serve someone else together on SERVE DAY (July 15th)! Get on the SERVE DAY app and find a serve project or coordinate your own.

prayer

God, thank You for the gift of joy. Thank You for joy that doesn't depend on what's happening around us. Thank You for a joy rooted in knowing You. You see what's been happening in our world, and You know the toll it's taken on our joy. We pray against all of the things that have damaged our joy. Give us the wisdom and strength to choose joy when everything around us is falling apart. Help us remember that You want us to live lives full of true and lasting joy, which is only found in Jesus. Remind us that no matter what, we can choose to walk in joy. We can become the chief spokesperson over our situations. Create in us habits that help us live lives of joy. Restore in us the joy that only comes from You. We've been through a lot, but You are a God who restores, heals, and transforms. We surrender our lives to You, we repent, and we're turning to You. In Your Name, we pray. Amen.