

Understanding the Lord's Joy

by Alan Martin

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding joy in the Lord and living a life dedicated to doing the Father's will, which is the key to experiencing true joy and fulfillment. It highlights the need to seek the joy that Jesus had in fulfilling the Father's work, bearing much fruit, and glorifying God's name. The message encourages believers to focus on serving God wholeheartedly, seeking His kingdom, and causing His name to be hallowed through transformed lives that bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Scripture: John 15:7, Hebrews 12:1, Matthew 6:19, Ezekiel 36:25

Topics: "Joy in the Lord", "Living for God's Will"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of finding joy in the Lord and living a life dedicated to doing the Father's will, which is the key to experiencing true joy and fulfillment. It highlights the need to seek the joy that Jesus had in fulfilling the Father's work, bearing much fruit, and glorifying God's name. The message encourages believers to focus on serving God wholeheartedly, seeking His kingdom, and causing His name to be hallowed through transformed lives that bear the fruit of the Spirit.

Transcript

If you have your Bible and you want to start where I'm going to start this morning, you want to turn to John chapter 15. It's important for us to realize that the Christian life will never work without the joy of the Lord. You're not going to live a life that is righteous and faithful simply based upon the fact that you know what you should do.

It's not obligation, it's jubilation that is the secret to the Christian life. Being filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, as Peter said, because the joy of the Lord is our strength. And so if we're not rejoicing in the Lord always, and Paul said, I say again, rejoice in the Lord always, then something is wrong.

And it could be that we don't understand the joy of the Lord. Well, let's look at the joy of the Lord Jesus. That's in John chapter 15.

So if you're there with me in John chapter 15, I'm going to start in verse 7, John 15, verse 7. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified in this, that you bear much fruit and so prove yourselves to be my disciples. Just in the same way the Father has loved me, I have also loved you.

Now abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in me, in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. And these things I have spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, my joy, and your joy may be full.

So for our joy to be full to its capacity, it takes the joy of Jesus filling it. So you and I need to understand what was his joy. What was the joy of Jesus? Let's consider that this morning because that's the joy we need making our own joy complete.

If you're still in the book of John, flip back to John chapter 4. There at the woman of the well. Jesus doesn't use the word joy here, but it's very similar. He's expressing the idea.

You remember the story. He's going through Samaria and they came to the place where Jacob had dug his well there. And the disciples had been sent into town.

And while they were gone, a woman who came to draw in the middle of the day came to draw water. She was a Samaritan. And Jesus ended up in a long conversation with her.

And that's not our focus. Our focus is after she goes back to town, excited to tell everyone that the Messiah, she has found the Messiah. The disciples show up and they're surprised to see that he's even talking to a woman.

And verse 31 of John chapter 4 picks up the story. Meanwhile, the disciples were urging him saying, Rabbi, eat. But he said to them, I have food.

You don't know about food that you don't understand. So the disciples were saying to one another, thinking in the physical, has anyone brought him something to eat? And Jesus said to them, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. So by saying my food, he's saying my sustenance.

What drives me, what energizes me is to do my father's will and to finish his work. Now with that in mind, let's consider that the joy of the Lord Jesus is doing his father's will and finishing his father's work. Now, the father desires his name to be glorified in the earth.

Do you remember what we read in John chapter 15? This is my father's glory, or it may say, by this is my father glorified. What is, how is the father glorified? This is my father's glory, that you do what? Bear much fruit. So this must be at the heart of what Jesus is saying.

His sustenance, his meat is doing the will of his heavenly father, which is to bear much fruit. Let's see if this bears itself out in scripture. All right, everybody's turn to the book of Hebrews chapter 12.

Hebrews chapter 12. We'll start in verse 1. Hebrews 12. Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us.

And let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Verse 2, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising this shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Now that's an interesting expression, who for the joy set before him.

So what was his joy? It has to do with doing the father's will and finishing his work. And we know that what brings glory to the father is bearing much fruit. So Jesus is on the way to the cross.

We know it's a difficult time for him. And we're going to look at that in a passage in a moment. But we remember from the garden of Gethsemane, he was anguishing in prayer.

He anguished so intensely that the scripture says a sweat drops of blood. His veins were so under pressure that blood was oozing from his veins in the pores of his forehead. Sweating drops of blood.

And remember what he pled for the father? Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass for me. That was before him. That's what he had to endure, what he knew he was about to endure.

But he finished by saying, nevertheless, not what I will, but thy will be done. And I think we know what he, he understood what that will was. And I think one of the passages that express it most clearly is in John chapter 12.

Look in John chapter 12 and see these thoughts come together. This is right before the last supper. And some Greeks or Jews from the Greek cities around the Mediterranean have come to Philip and they want to see Jesus.

And this is, this take, this is recorded in John chapter 12. I'll start at verse 20 so you can pick up the context. John 12 verse 20.

Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship the feast. These then came to Philip who was from Bethsaida of Galilee and began to ask him saying, sir, we wish to see Jesus. And Philip came and told Andrew and Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus.

And Jesus answered them saying, the hour has come for the son of man to be glorified. And then follow, follow this very carefully. Truly, truly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone.

But if it dies, what does it do? It bears much fruit. So what's on his mind? What's the joy set before him even though he's struggling? The knowledge that what he's about to do will bear much fruit. That's what's on his mind.

Let's keep reading. He says, verse 25. He who loves his life, loses it.

And he who hates his life in this world will keep it to eternal life. Anyone who serves me, he must follow me. And where I am, there my servant will be also.

And if anyone serves me, the Father will honor him. And then he says this, now my soul has become deeply shaken, dismayed, or exceedingly sorrowful. The word has to do with he's literally shaking back and forth.

He knows what's ahead of him. And what shall I say? He's wrestling within himself. What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour.

So he says, knowing what he's saying, Father, glorify thy name. Remember, what glorifies the Father? What glorifies the Father? When we bear much fruit. And he has just said, unless a seed or a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone.

The only way for much fruit to bear is if that seed dies. And he is thinking about why he came. The purpose he came.

And the horror of it is shaking him in his soul. But there's a joy set before him. Something is set before him.

And that joy is doing the will of his Father, which he knows the will of his Father is to be glorified by bearing much fruit. So what gave Jesus the ability to endure the cross was this joy. By following through with this, the will of my Father.

My Father is going to be glorified because I am going to bear much fruit. And you know what that fruit is? We are. That was the joy set before him.

He was thinking that unless he died, we would not become the fruit. So the joy set before him was he was thinking about how many of us would be brought to the Father through him. Why is it important to know that? This is his joy.

Jesus didn't experience the joy of marriage. Jesus didn't experience the joy of millions. Jesus didn't experience a lot of the joy that men try to entertain themselves by.

Jesus was filled and anointed with the oil of joy because he had a singular focus. And that was doing the will of his Father by bringing others to the Father. And it's that joy, it's the only joy that can make our joy full.

There's not a TV program. There's not a magazine. There is not a live streaming program.

There is not a gaming program. None of those things will fulfill the joy in our life. Like living to do the Father's will and seeing others come to know him.

That's what drove Jesus. That's the meat, that's the food that he had that his disciples didn't understand. And that's the internal strength.

It was that set before him that caused him to be able to endure. He had that singular focus. Do you remember when Jesus talked in the book of Matthew chapter 6? If you want to turn there and see it with me.

In Matthew chapter 6 there in the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus talks about that there's something that's not possible. And I want you to differentiate and make a distinction.

He did not say it's not permitted. What he said it's not possible. Read with me carefully in Matthew chapter 6. I'm going to start with verse 19.

Matthew 6, 19. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in or steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Do you remember what was the treasure of the Lord Jesus? His treasure was doing his Father's will by bearing much fruit. In other words, doing his Father's will to bring many of us to God.

That was the treasure of his heart. Wherever a man's treasure is, there will his heart be also. And then he says this, verse 22.

The eye is the lamp of the body. So then if the eye is single. The reason they translate it single is because the Greek word is aplous.

It literally is if any man's eye is unfolded. The idea here is if your vision and your focus is undivided. So a divided focus means you cannot see clearly.

Your whole body will not be full of light if your focus is divided. If the eye is single, undivided, whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

And if the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness? And then here's what he's talking about, about being divided. If your focus is divided, and let's ask ourselves, is this a division that applies to us? No one is able to serve two masters. He didn't say no one is permitted to.

You're just not able to. You can't straddle the fence. You will either love one, place high value upon one, and care very little about the other.

Or you will cling to the one, cling, and think down upon the other. You cannot serve God and man. Boiling it down into simplicity, you really cannot live to serve yourself and serve God at the same time.

It's not possible. Now, what did I mean by it's not possible? I'm not saying you can't do it because a lot of people do. What do I mean by it's not possible? You'll never experience the joy of the Lord.

The fullness that makes your joy complete, serving the Lord a little bit, and serving yourself a little bit will get you a little bit. A little bit of back and forth. A little bit of up and down.

A little bit here, a little bit there. You'll do some good here and turn it right around, and undo it with some bad here. Why? Because your heart is divided.

It's divided between the love of yourself and the love of the Lord. This is why Jesus said, whoever tries to save his life, you end up losing it. Because you can't serve the Lord and still try to save your life.

It's interesting that I say that. When Jesus said, you can't live the way that God designed fullness of life to be, and do that. You can exist.

You can get by. You can limp along. You can try to satisfy your life with worldly pleasures.

You can even include trying to find satisfaction and joy in doing good things. In volunteering and serving and in other ways. But you can't experience the life that Jesus has talked about.

Because he said in order to experience the life that he had in mind, you have to lose your life. And all he's saying was, and think about it from his point of view. Jesus knew that the life that we're trying to save on our own, has been tainted by sin.

Has been corrupted. Is crippled. We'll never be able, trying to live in our crippled and infected humanity, to experience the joy that Jesus is talking about.

The joy he had in completely living to do the Father's will. And to bring others to know the Father. That's what drove him.

And you can study the scriptures. But let me just share something with you. I think you know this.

We've mentioned it before. And I've said this before about the Lord Jesus. I don't believe that anyone has ever lived a fuller life, with more joy, than the Lord Jesus.

And get this. Here's how he lived. He said, I never say what I want to say.

I only say what my Father tells me to say. And I don't do whatever I want to do. I only do whatever my Father shows me to do.

And you know how he described his life? He said, my yoke is easy. And my burden is light. And if you take my yoke upon you, and you learn of me, you'll learn that I'm meek and lowly of heart.

Meek means he's restrained. What was he restrained? He restrained himself from doing what he wanted. He did what the Father showed him to do.

And he was filled with joy in doing it. He said what the Father told him to say. And he was filled with joy in saying it.

And he taught his disciples. I've told you these things. That if any man wants to come after me, you want to live the way I live? You want to experience my joy? You want to know what life is like with a single vision, an undivided heart, so that your whole body is full of light? You want to know how to do that? Here's what you need to do.

Deny yourself. Deny that part of you that thinks you're going to get somewhere by trying to satisfy yourself doing your own things. It's a trap.

The fullness in life is found in serving the Lord. Doing His will. Seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness.

What did Jesus say? If you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, all these things will be added to you. But what if you're not seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness? Is He saying most of these things will be taken from you? We just need to understand by faith that to deny ourselves, to deny trying to satisfy our life by doing what we think will bring us satisfaction and pleasure, and instead, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Seek to experience the same joy that the Lord Jesus experienced.

He lived to do the Father's will. And the Father's will was that He bear much fruit. And that's how the Father's glorified.

Now, let me bring that to a very practical level for us today. My message is not long. It's not something that we haven't been talking about.

It's something we've been talking about much. If you go back to the early prophets, and they speak about the purpose of God creating a new covenant. Let me set it up for you.

You can read this. I won't have you turn there now. But you can read about this in the prophet Ezekiel, the book of Ezekiel.

And if you read in the latter part of chapter 36, the Lord explains that He is going to do something entirely new, unlike what He had before with His people Israel. Because the history of His people Israel under the covenant He made with them was very erratic. Now and then, a person would raise up that seemed to

have a heart for God, and some people would follow them, and the people would be stirred, and they'd consider their ways, and they'd reform, and they'd change, and they'd start following God.

But they continually drifted back into ignoring what God said, worshipping other gods, conforming to the nations around them, learning their practices, worshipping the Lord like the other nations worshipped their God. Is it any wonder that Paul tries to tell us in the New Testament, listen, I appeal to you by the mercies of God to be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Don't be conformed any longer to the pattern of this world.

Don't conform to them. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you can prove what God's will is, His good, pleasing, and perfect will. Because the people of Israel continually looked at the nations around them and imitated them rather than living the way God instructed them.

So, in the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord to Ezekiel said this, I'm going to do something, something new. And I'm not even going to do it because of you. He said, here's the reason I'm going to do it, wherever you have gone, because the Lord had to scatter them.

That's what the Lord would do. Through Isaiah, through Jeremiah, and the other prophets, the Lord would plead with His people, Stop conforming to the nations around you. Return to Me.

Serve Me with all your heart. Seek Me. Find Me.

And it will go well with you. I'll forgive you. Though your sins be as scarlet, they'll be as white as wool.

Though they be red like crimson, I'll make them as white as snow. But they wouldn't listen. They kept resisting and they were stubborn.

So here's what the Lord had to do. He would have to send nations. He would raise up the Assyrians.

He would raise up the Babylonians. He would raise up other nations and punish His people and scatter them out of the land of promise. And so they were scattered all over the Middle Eastern world at that time, not living in the promise.

And everywhere they went, the Lord said to the prophet Ezekiel, look, you caused My name to be drug into the mud, basically. You're My people, but there's no power in your life. There's no blessing in your life.

Look at you. You're conquered. There's no miraculous in your life.

You act and live just like the people around you. Wherever they went, they just kind of blended in and lived like the people of the country that they were in. And the Lord said, so I'm going to do something, but the reason I'm going to do it is not because of you.

It's for the sake of My name. I am concerned about My name that you're continually dragging through the mud. So I'm going to do something new, and I am going to make My name great again.

And here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to bring you out of all the places where you've been scattered, and I'm going to bring you back to the place I want you to live. And you know what I'm going to do? I'm going to start cleansing you.

I am going to cleanse you of all your unfaithfulness. I'm going to take out that heart that you've hardened by continually resisting Me, and I'm going to put in a sensitive heart, sensitive to Me, sensitive to My counsel, sensitive to My instruction. And I'm going to put My Spirit inside you, and I'm going to inspire you to obey Me, to respect Me, to love Me, and to walk in My ways so that this, so that I can show My holiness through your conduct.

Now that's pretty amazing that God wants to restore the greatness of His name by so dynamically changing His people that their lives cause His name to be honored. And that's you and I. That's our high calling in Christ. That we not only have our sins forgiven, we are to experience a transformation.

If any man is in Christ, and you hear me say this often, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things that cause God's name to be drug into the mud, your old anger, your old indifference, your old backsliding, your old lack of self-control, your old weakness and yieldedness. All those things are to pass away.

And all things are to become new. The fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, meekness, faithfulness, self-control.

These beautiful characteristics produced in us by God's Spirit within us cause the name of the Lord to be honored by the dynamically changed lives of Christians that follow Christ. That's what's supposed to be happening in the church. And what do you think the Lord does when a church is not fulfilling that calling? You think He's just going to let it go? It's not even fulfilling the purpose that He has it for.

The whole purpose of the church, the whole purpose of Jesus Christ bringing His people to God is so that the name of the Father would be seen as great again. Do you see this in the Lord's Prayer? Think of it, you know it. Just think of the first line of it together.

Our Father, who art in heaven. What's the first thing, first concern? Hallowed. You see His first concern? Jesus knew why He was here.

To cause the name of God to be hallowed. And you want His joy in you? That's your purpose in your home, at your job, while you're driving, whatever you're doing. If you want the joy of the Lord Jesus in you, making you joyful in everything you do, you will cause the Lord's name to be hallowed.

You won't speak. You won't act. You won't think in a way that will cause His name to be dishonored.

You want His name to be hallowed. Our Father, which is art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. And then what's the next important thing on His mind? Thy kingdom come.

Here's another. Thy will... He's not even about Himself. You see that? His joy was never about Himself.

How many of our prayers begin with help me, help me, do for me. He's not there. He knew the Father would take care of Him.

His entire concern was the Father's name, the Father's will, the Father's kingdom. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

And then He thinks about Himself and us. And what does He think about us? Just give us this day our... Just keep us alive. Just keep us alive so we can serve You.

And the next thing is forgive our trespasses. Just... This isn't living for Him. It's even in the Lord's prayer.

And it's in the place where Jesus taught His disciples about prayer. When you pray, praying like this, there was a man, and I've said this before, and I want to continue to say these things to you. You have them firmly fixed in your mind.

There's a man who suddenly received company in the middle of the night. I didn't receive company in the middle of the night, but it was almost 10 o'clock. The Walsh's showed up from Monterrey last night.

Well, I usually go to bed at 8, so it was kind of the middle of the night for me. But they came, and my wife wanted to make sure, what is on our heart to do? When someone comes to your house, what do you want them to do? You want them to eat. You want them to be refreshed.

This man had the same desire, but he had nothing. I don't know where his wife was. His wife is not pictured in this story, so it's possibly he was a widower, raising children, because there's no mention of her.

But anyway, he has nothing. Evidently, he's gone to bed, and they ate. They had everything.

He has nothing prepared anyway, and he evidently doesn't have it to prepare, because instead of going to the cabinet and starting fixing something, he goes next door. He goes to his neighbor's house, and he starts banging on the door. It's the middle of the night, and he's not even asking for himself.

He's banging. He's asking his neighbor to get up, because his heart is to provide for these people who've come to him. He's driven.

Jesus is telling us something. What's your prayer life like? Is it about your joy? Is it about you? Is it about you feeling good? Are you going to the Father so that you'll be filled with His Spirit and joy so that you'll have enough to share with others? In this is my Father glorified that you bear much fruit. You see, even in teaching us how to pray, it's not about us.

It's about seeking others to be blessed. Isn't that what Jesus said? It's more blessed to give than to receive. And He says to us, so give, and what will happen? It will be given to you.

You want the Lord to give to you? You want the Lord to fill you with joy? Then have the heart to see the joy of the Lord come to other people. You want the Lord's blessing to be with you? Have the Lord's heart to see other people be blessed. And watch the Lord fill you so that you can bless others.

And if the Lord begins to fill you so that you can bless others, guess what happens? The Lord's joy will be in you and your joy will begin to be full. That's the joy of the Lord. It's living to do the Father's will and to bear much fruit in bringing people to God.

So do I have fun in the kitchen? Oh, yes, I do. Do I have joy in the food ministry? Getting up in the morning, bringing the truck over, hooking up the trader, driving the donor daily bridge, loading it up and come back and unload. Do I have joy doing it? Yes, I do.

My joy is fuller than if I were on the lake trolling my fishing. I'm not saying there's anything wrong with fishing. Men can have their joy doing that.

I'm not saying one's right or wrong. I'm just saying, I'm telling you it's true. Serve the Lord with gladness and watch Him fill you with joy and watch your own joy begin to be complete and experience the blessing of living to see others blessed.

That's the secret of the Lord's joy. That's why it's so interesting. Back to that place where I said it's the most clear.

I'm not going to have you turn back there, but I'm going to take you back there. Jesus is troubled. He's troubled in His spirit.

He knows what's happening because He's just said. He just finished saying, you know, unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit.

And He says, you know, my soul is exceedingly troubled. And what shall I say? He's wrestling within Himself. Shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? No.

He said, no. Father, glorify Thy name. Do you remember what happened then next? Rarely happened even in the life of Jesus.

Immediately, God the Father couldn't be silent. God the Father was moved to declare out loud, I have glorified it and I will glorify it again. Because this, His Son, had the perfect heart.

When He said, glorify Your name, the Father, it moved the Father to speak His blessing over Him. And I want a life that moves God to speak over me. I want Him to pour out His Spirit upon me.

And I'd like to see His Spirit poured out upon us. And He's not going to pour out His Spirit upon us just for coming here and sitting in the pews. No, that's good.

We'll be strengthening one another. We'll encourage one another. He'll pour out His Spirit on us when we are pouring out our lives for other people.

Got it? Alright, that's today's message.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/ivLjYqM9FfM.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/alan-martin/understanding-the-lords-joy/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net