

# How Our Joy Can Be Full - Part 2

by Zac Poonen

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*The kingdom of heaven is near, and we need to turn our focus from earthly things to heavenly things to experience full joy and eternal life.*

**Duration:** 8:34

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:19-21, Romans 14:17, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 3:2, 1 John 1:4

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Kingdom Living"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the pursuit of eternal life and the fullness of joy that comes with it. It contrasts legalistic righteousness with the joy found in pursuing God's kingdom and heavenly blessings. The message calls for a shift from being occupied with earthly things to focusing on heavenly realities, where true joy and fulfillment are found.

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## Transcript

for all eternity. And in this short period between eternity past and eternity future, God is gathering together a people who have understanding of this and who come into that thing which existed in eternity. See, eternal life, we can say, is like a long line, began in eternity past, eternity future, and here we are down on this earth.

God says you can come into that line and be a part of that instead of living down here occupied with all types of problems and trying to get on in this world. And then, verse 4, we are writing to you these things so that our joy may be made full, and your joy will be full too. Jesus often spoke about our joy being full.

That is a mark of people who have come into this experience of eternal life. I'll tell you this because I'm absolutely convinced about it. The only people on earth who can rejoice in the Lord 24 hours a day, seven days a week, like the Bible says, are those who pursue this eternal life with the Father.

Don't think all these people whom you watch preaching on television have got joy 24 hours a day, seven days a week. They look very joyful when they're on the platform. If you look at their private life, many of them lose their temper, they get upset, they're depressed, even though they've got money and millions and talk about prosperity and houses and lands and cars, etc.

John didn't have all that, but he had something else that would last for all eternity, joy that was full. And to me, that is the test. In the Old Testament, they had righteousness without joy.

No, they had no joy in the Old Testament. They had righteousness. You look up a word like righteousness, and it's found plenty of it in the Old Testament.

Israel pursued righteousness, it says in Romans. But what did they get? They got a legalistic righteousness. And the mark of people who are legalistic is this.

They can't rejoice all the time, because they are disturbed when somebody else doesn't fit in with their understanding of righteousness. It doesn't matter what it is. Some people want to keep the Sabbath, and some people have other rules about various things.

The Pharisees had rules about washing their hands, and today Christians have many, many rules which they try to impose on others. But you can see one mark of all these people. You'll see them very often, the long faces and gloomy, because there is no joy in legalistic righteousness.

And if your joy is not full, ask yourself whether you're a legalist or whether you're not pursuing eternal life, but something else. The Lord wants our joy to be full. The kingdom of God is what Jesus brought.

Until then, throughout the Old Testament, they had a kingdom of earth. Everything that God promised Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their children was earthly. Please remember this.

Everything from Genesis chapter 12, what God chose Abraham, right up to the end of Malachi, was earthly. He never promised them anything in heaven. Many earthly blessings, long life, many children, a lot of prosperity.

Your enemies will be defeated. You'll always be on top. You'll never be in debt.

You'll have plenty of money. So many things, but heavenly things, zero. And here was an earth that lived like that.

Here was a nation of Israel that lived like that for 1,500 years. Their whole mind was occupied with earthly things. Oh, God's going to bless me.

And if sickness and drought came, you know God hadn't blessed them. They were defeated by their enemies. If they were killed, God hadn't blessed them.

If they could be thrown into a lion's den and the lions wouldn't touch them, God would bless them. If they were thrown into the fire and the fire wouldn't touch them, God had blessed them. And then came the last prophet, the forerunner of Jesus Christ.

He said, tell us in Israel, listen, turn around now. Turn around from what? They've been occupied not only with sin, but with earthly things. When John the Baptist said, repent, repent means turn about.

It's not just sin. Repentance is not just turning from sin. That itself is a great thing, but Israel that is occupied with earthly blessings, turn around now because the kingdom of heaven is coming.

That was the message of the new covenant at the beginning. Turn around from this kingdom of earth. Those who want to turn around, those who want to be occupied with the kingdom of earth, stick there.

You know what is the message I would preach to today's Christians? Turn around from facing the kingdom of earth because the kingdom of heaven is near. It's already come, but most Christians haven't

experienced it because their mind is set on earthly things. It's right to use earthly things.

It's wrong to have our minds set on earthly things. It's a question of where my mind is set. I may have to work with earthly things.

I have to work in a job, look after my family, go to the store, buy so many things, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But it's a question of where my mind is set. That's the test.

And John the Baptist is a forerunner to prepare people for the first coming of Christ. And he said, if you want to be prepared, turn from being occupied with earthly things to heavenly things because the kingdom of heaven is near. The apostles preached that.

Paul preached Ephesians 1.3, blessed be God our Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, which is different from every earthly blessing, every material blessing in the earthly places in Moses. So you have a contrast, every material blessing, physical blessing in earthly places in Moses, or every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. And the message of John the Baptist was turn from this to that.

And I believe this, that a person who's really turned and set his mind on the things that are above, one proof of it will be, because it's very easy to deceive ourselves, one proof of it will be our joy will be full. Turn to Romans 14 and verse 17, where it speaks about this new kingdom. Romans 14 and verse 17, it says, the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking.

And we could add a lot of things to eating and drinking. It's not clothes. It's not fun.

It's not entertainment. Does it mean we shouldn't have fun and entertainment? Sure. Is he saying that we shouldn't eat and drink? Is he saying that we shouldn't dress decently? Is he saying we shouldn't take care of our appearance? No.

But he says that's not the main thing in God's kingdom. If your mind is set on eating and drinking, and what shall we wear? And what shall we eat? And what shall we drink? And what shall we do? And here and that and the other and the other and the other. And where shall I invest my money? And where shall I do this? And where shall I do that? You can do all these things.

But when your mind is set on these things, I'll tell you. Without knowing anything about your life, I can tell you.

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