

Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit

by Zac Poonen

This sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking the Kingdom of God first, focusing on righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. It highlights the need to be poor in spirit, hunger and thirst for God's righteousness, maintain peace in the heart, and experience joy regardless of circumstances. The speaker encourages listeners to prioritize seeking God's Kingdom above earthly desires, trusting in God's provision and guidance for all needs.

Scripture: Luke 16:16, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 5:3, Acts 24:15, Philippians 4:4, Romans 14:17, 1 Peter 4:17, Hebrews 12:10

Topics: "Seeking God's Kingdom", "Righteousness and Joy in the Holy Spirit"

Description

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Transcript

I want to begin with a verse in Luke's Gospel chapter 16 and verse 16. We all speak much about the New Covenant as compared to the Old Covenant and we proclaim that in our churches we proclaim the New Covenant which many never speak about. The Gospel of the New Covenant is called here in verse 16 the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and the Old Covenant is described by Jesus here as the Law and the Prophets.

That's how the Old Covenant was described and there was it was an earthly kingdom. All the promises that God gave Israel were related to this earth. They would be prosperous, they would defeat their earthly enemies, they would be physically healthy and all the blessings that earthly people seek for God had promised to Israel.

But after that from the time of John the Baptist he said the kingdom of God would be proclaimed which is called in in Matthew's Gospel it's always called the kingdom of heaven. He rarely uses the expression kingdom of God but kingdom of heaven is the same thing and we're familiar with the words of Jesus in

Matthew 6 33 that we must seek that kingdom first and his righteousness and then everything else we need in life will be added to us. And he said there in Matthew 6 32 that the Gentiles means all the people in the world think of truly wholehearted Christians and the people of the world.

The people of the world are eagerly seeking after many things. He speaks there about food, clothing, housing, etc. And when you think of that expression the people of the world eagerly seek after all these things.

I remember when I was some years ago I tried to write down or make a list in my mind of what are the things that the people in the world eagerly seek after. It's a good exercise to for you to do. What are the things that the people in the world eagerly seek after? Not in a very light way but very eagerly seriously.

And once you make a list of that and you know you know the people in the world and you yourself know having lived in the world all of us we know what are the things that the people in the world seek after and make a list of all that and then ask yourself whether you are eagerly seeking after any of those things that you yourself listed there. It's a very good exercise to help us to judge ourselves and to see whether that may be the reason why we are not possessing the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God. The Gentiles eagerly seek after these things but it says in Matthew 6 32 your father knows what you need.

I mean if you make a list of ten things that the world is seeking after the heavenly father may feel that you need only five or six of those things. So those things he will provide. But in order for that provision to come to us without our seeking for them.

If you seek for them well the worldly people do a better job than us because they seek after all these things and they get a lot of it. But here the promise to a wholehearted disciple is that everything that your heavenly father sees that you need you will get it'll be added to you without your seeking for it without your pursuing after it because you spend your life seeking for the kingdom of God first and his righteousness. It's a fantastic promise that every and when I think of the things I need I'm not just thinking of food and clothes and a house there are many other things we need if you have children we need to get them educated we need to prepare them for their own life in the world so that they can earn their bread and food and buy clothing and have a house to live in we need to prepare our children for and they will get a little older to get married to the right person all these things we need and how are we going to get them in the world they go after those things and they'll get they get it that way they go after food and house and property and marriage and everything else and here the Lord says you won't have to do that if you're really wholeheartedly seeking God's kingdom first in amazing ways the Lord will work it all out that he will arrange that you'll get all these things and you'll get the best and I want to say dear brothers and sisters that when you come to the end of your life you should be able to have this testimony that there are many things I needed on this earth for life on this earth and to live for God and I never pursued after them I spent my life seeking the kingdom of God and I found all these other things God added to me without my pursuing after them I want to tell you something that there are very few Christians who have that testimony because many Christians are seeking their kingdom of God plus all these other things they they don't experience the this promise that these things are added to you because they feel that if you don't pursue it we won't get it well I want to tell you my testimony of more than 50 years I can honestly say I did not seek after the things of the world the things that I sought after were the things of the kingdom of God I wanted this to be my testimony the end of my life if people could examine all the inner areas of my life and my bank account and my private life and everything else if they could they can't see it but if they could see it they should be able to say well here is a person who didn't seek after these earthly necessities and they

were provided for him one way or the other and that's not just for me that's what every single child of God is not because I'm in full-time Christian work I say that I was seeking the kingdom of God when I was working in the Navy all those years the kingdom of God was first and I realized at a certain time that I would not get promotion in the Navy which was my ambition if I sought if I lived by God's principles of righteousness I said okay I'll give that up I'm not gonna seek so it's not for full-time Christian workers it's for everybody seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness now the word righteousness is something that's found about 200 times in the Old Testament there is an old covenant righteousness and the righteous that that's not evil the old covenant righteousness is not an evil thing it's it's righteousness is being right but yet is different from new covenant righteousness and it's very easy for us to mistake our righteousness to be the new covenant righteousness what does it mean first of all to seek the kingdom of God first for many years I thought it meant becoming a missionary or even if you're not a missionary sharing the gospel with others and being burdened to proclaim the gospel in the open air or invite people to the church and give them tracts and things like that that's how I see God's kingdom first that was an idea that I got from my own mind and from what other way I was a young Christian those days and other Christians thought that way but when I began to study the scriptures and I scripture must interpret scripture I don't find that definition of the kingdom of God anywhere but the definition of the kingdom of God I found in scripture is in Romans 14 and verse 17 the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit Romans 14 verse 17 a righteousness produced in me by the Holy Spirit not my own my own is the righteousness of the law anything that I've accomplished without the help of God you know there are a lot of people in the world who live pretty upright lives and sometimes their behavior is better than the behavior of some who call themselves Christians there is a righteousness that I can accomplish that I can achieve by my own self-denial and my own effort by my denying myself see self-denial is not a peculiarly Christian teaching many Hindus teach self-denial many types of self-denial but it's not the self-denial that Jesus talked about it's an external self-denial where self still sits on the throne untouched but denying myself in many ways on the outside that's not the self-denial that Jesus spoke about Jesus went to the root of the problem he put an axe to the root and it's a self inside that he's wants to remove so there is a righteousness in the Old Covenant and there's a righteousness in the New Covenant there's a joy in the Old Covenant there's a joy in the New Covenant there's a type of peace in the Old Covenant and there's a type of peace in the New Covenant the kingdom of God which we had to seek first seek first the kingdom of God I it is a righteousness produced by the Holy Spirit and a peace and a joy produced by the Holy Spirit if I'm not actively earnestly seeking that I'm not seeking the kingdom of God but if I do seek that the Lord has promised that all the other things I ever need on earth including the measure of health that I need to live on this earth God will give it to me I'm absolutely sure because that's God's promise turn with me now to Philippians and chapter 3 where all speaks about these two types of righteousness the kingdom of God is righteousness in the Holy Spirit and Paul says in Philippians chapter 3 of his own testimony he says when he came to know Christ he counted for this I'm reading from Philippians 3 verse 7 onwards everything that I counted is gained for me in the olden days I now count as lost for the sake of Christ and he says knowing Christ where say it is such a precious thing that all the other things are useless and he says I count it verse 8 as rubbish that righteousness I had as a Pharisees rubbish that I may gain Christ and now verse 9 now you see verse 9 he speaks of the two types of righteousness here the old covenant one and the new covenant one I want to be found in Christ now not having a righteousness of my own which I got from the law now we may never have been Jews and never been under the Old Testament law but there is a righteousness that we can have by keeping the letter of the law even by the letter of the new covenant I can take words in the new covenant and try to keep them for example you read about Jesus saying that we shouldn't or the word of God says we

shouldn't get angry you know there are a lot of Hindus who believe that they shouldn't get angry I know a brother who came to our church who was a Hindu first he said I overcame anger with yoga and self-discipline long before I became a Christian that was I mean externally he wasn't getting angry there were other Christians around him or getting angry but he wasn't but he says when he came to Christ he realized it was not was not the right system that was not the type of overcoming anger that Jesus spoke about because it is only on the outside it's controlling one's tongue and controlling expressions of anger whereas and the anger that Jesus spoke about is in the heart and there's no amount of discipline of any religion or any yoga or anything that will remove it from there anything that's merely on the outside is a righteousness of the law you must remember this if it doesn't come from within it's old covenant righteousness I don't want to be found having a righteousness of my own which is from the law in fact he says here I want to count it as rubbish in verse 8 I want to count this external self-control of my anger as rubbish it only brings me the honor of men that here is a person who's mild-tempered never gets angry I have to consider that honor of men as garbage I'm not interested I just want to mention this here my dear brothers and sisters that you'll never come into the righteousness of God unless first of all you recognize that the opinions of men are garbage very very important we cannot you know proceed further if I don't first deal with this I have to recognize that the honor of all the brothers in the church or sisters in the church is absolute garbage fit for the trash can do they think I'm a person who controls my temper do they think I'm a very generous person do they think that I'm a very nice helpful type of person or whatever else they think I'm a great preacher take all of that and put it in the garbage then I can come to the righteousness of God because that is inward it is only before God's face that I don't want to have a righteousness of my own which brings me the honor of men but that which is through faith in Christ faith means dependence upon Christ the righteousness produced in me by Christ which will not be there if Christ removes his power and you often heard me use the example of the branch in the tree it's the example Jesus used you are the branches and he's the main tree and that's sap flowing from the tree into the branch is what produces the fruit so that's a picture of the Holy Spirit flowing into me into my inner being through from Christ producing righteousness in me that is why to be filled with the Holy Spirit was the most important thing that the Apostles emphasized I say once you're born again you need to be filled with the Holy Spirit and to be continuously filled with the Holy Spirit it's what Jesus spoke about when he said the rivers of living water will flow from your innermost being that could not be true in the old covenant and the old covenant is all on the outside so that's what he speaks here a righteousness that comes through faith in Christ which comes by from God on the basis of dependence upon God in other words every bit of my righteousness must come by dependence upon God Lord I can't be holy if you don't make me holy I can never overcome anger in my life unless you deal with me in the inside I can overcome it on the outside with yoga and discipline and get a tremendous reputation even in the church oh there's such a mild-mannered brother who never gets angry what's the use of that opinion it's trash Paul says I count it as rubbish it's not just that I don't value it that itself is not sufficient I count it as rubbish verse 8 that honor I get for something I produced myself I counted as rubbish you know I can read scripture and produce some very clever idea from it and present that clever idea to people and people honor me from rubbish if it does not produce life in people if it has not gone out from my heart and brought life to people however people appreciate it and say wow what a wonderful way he presented that or how gracious his speeches it's all rubbish anything that comes from within myself refined self is rubbish it must come from Christ it must come from God it must come from the Holy Spirit that's why a true disciple of Jesus will be desperate to be filled with the Holy Spirit continuously I mean if he's only concerned about his testimony before men he doesn't need the Holy Spirit because I tell you you can live a pretty good life without the Holy Spirit's power on the outside and you can get a good testimony even in a new covenant church without being filled with

the Holy Spirit well if your temperament is sort of more subdued and inward looking you can look like a good Christian but you may discover and Christ comes again that you had nothing of the righteousness of Christ because see let me show you a couple of verses it's the very first words that Jesus spoke in the Sermon on the Mount how can we possess the kingdom of God Matthew chapter 5 you're talking about the kingdom of God which is righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit it's called the kingdom of heaven in the Gospel of Matthew the first sentence in the Sermon on the Mount Matthew 5:3 is the gate it's the master key blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven theirs is the kingdom of God they are the ones who are going to get the righteousness of God the new covenant righteousness what is the requirement I'm constantly aware of my need that is the meaning of being poor in spirit think of a poor homeless man standing on the streets if he's really if he's not a fake and he's really homeless or sitting by besides some building he's aware of his need all the time and the equivalent of that in our spiritual life Lord I'm constantly aware of my need I don't have to say it it's a way of life it's like that that poor homeless man or a beggar you don't have to convince him hey you know you're poor you're in need you're in constantly you don't have to convince him about anything he's perfectly aware that he's a needy person he doesn't have money to get food he doesn't have money to meet his needs something like that something of the equivalent of that I don't have it Lord in me to make me like Jesus no my wholeheartedness in my zeal is not going to make me like Jesus no it has to come from God otherwise it'll be an artificial plastic fruit that I tie on the tree of a beautiful painted apple made of plastic that I hang hung up hang up on the tree to fool people that I got a lot of apples in my tree that's all it is fake and a lot of what many Christians call their righteousness is not the righteousness of God Paul said it's rubbish it's garbage and that's why I'll come to that in a moment why their lives are not so satisfying and also that's why they don't make spiritual progress they seem to be in the same position year after year after year they were good people at a certain time 25 years later they're good people that never made any progress in their Christian life so that can only come through poverty of spirit if I'm really poor in spirit means constantly aware of my need the kingdom of heaven is mine Jesus said this kingdom of God of righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit will be mine if I'm poor in spirit that's number one and the other thing it says here in verse 6 of Matthew 5 is I got a hunger and thirst for this righteousness it's not gonna come to the person who lazily asks God once in a while yeah Lord I'd like to be a little more righteous no that's not hungering and thirsting those who hunger and thirst for this type of righteousness which brings the approval of God they will be satisfied they will get more than they want but so what are the two things he said I have to be aware of my need poor in spirit and I have to hunger and thirst for the righteousness of God which means I'm not satisfied with that which I produce myself I'm not satisfied with the opinions of men I want the approval of God in my life this is one of the most important things if we want to avoid being deceived you know the Bible speaks about a person deceiving himself in a number of places where it says that I'll show you one example of that in Galatians in chapter 6 in Galatians in chapter 6 it says verse 3 if anyone thinks he's talking to believers he's talking to born-again believers the first verse is that brethren my dear brethren my dear fellow believers in the churches in Galatia I want to say to you if any of you where's Galatians 6:3 think that you're a somebody when actually you're a nobody you're deceiving yourself is it possible for a believer today in your church you perhaps to deceive yourself that you are somebody that you're very spiritual I've met numerous people like that who think they're spiritual when I can see through them they're not particularly when a young person has a zeal he thinks he's spiritual zeal is not spirituality the kingdom of God is righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit it's an inner righteousness and peace and joy which nothing in the world can take away that's what makes a man spiritual and Paul said you know we combine these verses that we've been looking at I thought everything else was rubbish in order that I may gain this and that's how he manifested the righteousness of God in his own life but the other

way to test it is well before I come to that you know the Bible says in Hebrews and chapter 12 that one reason why God disciplines us Hebrews in chapter 12 that our Heavenly Father this I'm talking about verse 9 and 10 our Heavenly Father disciplined us for a short time as seen best to them but God disciplines us for our good so that we may share or partake of the holiness that comes through his Holy Spirit that's why whenever you find God disciplining you in some way accept it bow your head there I've learned to do that through the years if I for example if I've lost a large amount of money through in whatever business I do or carelessness or anything Lord you're trying to teach me something or I used to ride a scooter in India and if I had an accident Lord what are you trying to teach me or even if I have a fever what are you trying to teach me Lord I is there maybe it's just it has no meaning to it but perhaps God is trying to teach me something and many times he is trying to teach me he disciplines us that I might partake of his holiness his holiness nobody in the Old Covenant could have that imagine this phrase here in Hebrews 12 10 that I can share his holiness the sap from the tree flowing into the branch not a holiness of my own which I manufactured through a lot of self-discipline and study of the Bible no which I share partake of his holiness exactly like the branch which can not produce a single fruit but produces a lot of fruit because it's in the in the tree I'm a share in his holiness God disciplines us and that's why I say to all of you as I say to myself never despise the discipline of God ask yourself Lord why do you allow this help me to learn what you have allowed in my life I accept it joyfully because I want to partake of your holiness I'm passionate about that that is to hunger and thirst after righteousness even concerning the fullness of the Spirit Jesus said you must thirst for it if you're thirsty come to me and believe you can be filled with the Holy Spirit all the time so now I want to turn back to Romans 14 17 we looked at that verse in Romans and 14 and verse 17 we thought that Holy Spirit defines the kingdom of God like this the kingdom of God that we must seek first and have all the other things added to us Matthew 6:33 seek first the kingdom of God never forget this what am I supposed to seek not the spreading the gospel that's a secondary thing but first of all that I might seek for righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit like I just mentioned to you it's the righteousness produced by the Holy Spirit now how will I know this is produced by the Holy Spirit or not well it gives me a little indication here there'll be a peace and there'll be a joy it'll not be it won't make me miserable a lot of people who claim to be righteous but they look so miserable the righteousness is which is always making people fight with others and have conflict with us even over doctrine there are people who get into arguments over doctrine I say no I'm not interested I'm not interested in conflict with anybody over any issue I've had people come to my house in in India many times want to argue about doctrine I say no let's let's pursue peace do you want me to explain to you the reason why I believe certain things I'll spend any amount of time to explain to you but if you're coming here to convince me that I'm wrong and you want to argue with me I'm sorry I say let's talk about something else that we both agree on in India that's usually cricket or something like that let's talk about some subject that you and I'll be agreed on because I don't want to argue with you I hate strife I want to avoid strife like I'd avoid the coronavirus or the plague no peace if you really have the righteousness of God there'll be peace in your heart and peace outside you know that when the angels came to declare to the shepherds about the Jesus having been born you know what they proclaimed there he was proclaimed and glory to God in the highest we read there the shepherds I don't be afraid this is Luke chapter 2 glory to God in the highest verse 14 Luke 2 14 and on earth peace among among whom only among those men we read Luke 2 14 peace among those men with whom God is well-pleased it's one of the marks of God's pleasure in my life or your life that he gives you a peace in your heart there's no there's no tension in your heart there's no strife that is a mark of the righteousness of God the Holy Spirit brings right from the beginning of Jesus birth the phrase is glory to God in the highest and on earth peace among those men with whom God is well-pleased that's one mark it's not the only mark but it's one of the marks of God being pleased with us that I have a peace in my

heart that my conscience does not trouble me about anything if your conscience troubles you about a wee little thing think of it like a speck in your eye think of it like a thorn in your foot it should make you uncomfortable if a thorn in your foot does not make you uncomfortable you've got leprosy because people with leprosy don't have any sensation but a person with sensation feels even a small little pinprick leave alone a thorn I want to be like that I want to feel even a pinprick in my conscience and settle it immediately peace that's how I know God is pleased with me I want to urge you my brothers and sisters seek for the that righteousness of the Holy Spirit mark one marker which is peace in your spirit at all times and not only in your spirit but like I said earlier with other people around me also because it says in Romans 12 and verse 18 if possible by the way this is the only command in the entire Bible who it says do it if possible there's no other command like that if possible don't get angry no if possible don't lust after women no if possible be honest no but one command if possible be at peace with all men peace in your heart there's no if possible we must have peace in our heart 24-7 all the time but peace with others that depends on the other person that's why it's not possible all the time Jesus was never in peace with the Pharisees the perfect Son of God was filled with the Holy Spirit could not be at peace with most of the people in Israel but on his side he was peaceful when they called him the devil prince of devils bills ago he was at peace he said have you spoken a word against the Son of Man you're forgiven there was peace there but he was not at peace with them they were not at peace with them and they slapped him on his face he's when you slap me I said what was right there was inner peace but he was not at peace with all the people they hated him so much they killed him but as much as it lies in us that means from my side I want peace with everybody everyone I don't care whether they hate me they spoke evil of me they did harm to me I want peace peace does not mean fellowship no Jesus had zero fellowship with the Pharisees there are many Christians I can't have fellowship with now I'll tell you honestly they may claim to be believers but they're not walking in the light because fellowship is very clear in 1 John chapter 1 if we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another and with God but if a person does not walk to walk in the light well I don't believe he has fellowship with God and he can't have fellowship with me yeah that's very important so I'll be at peace with him I love nothing against my heart my heart is absolutely clear I can love him and wish no evil for him wish the best for him and his family and everything else but I'm no fellowship so if possible be at peace with all men in other words I long for example I long to fellowship with every single born-again believer in the world but I found it's not possible because most of them don't want righteousness they want to do things which are unrighteous they I can't work together with lots and lots of believers in in in India I remember in the years when they used to have these public gatherings for what they called healing meetings in India some preacher would come from the United States to preach in India and all the churches all the pastors would join together and they would organize big meetings thousands and thousands of people in some public grounds and they would also ask me and I say I'm sorry I can't come because of one thing well two things first of all you collect money from these people Jesus never collected money from people when he preached to them if you don't collect money that's not number one condition and secondly when Jesus healed somebody they were really healed whereas you go into these healing meetings and you say somebody's healed and 99% of them are not healed you're fooling people that's why I cannot join with you I cannot work with you I can't fellowship that's why I said I cannot work with many many Christians because there's unrighteousness there I can't work with a Christian group that's always sending prayer letters to other places advertising their work and when Jesus said that we must not let other people know what we have done only the Lord must know and here they advertise it and they ask for money we need this we need this I said Jesus and Paul never did that so that's the reason why I find myself in working and fellowshiping with Christians I'm limited to a very very few people what to do I wish there were more but I'm not going to sacrifice righteous principles in order to increase the number that's

why the church that preaches the new covenant will never be a megachurch impossible you can either please people to make it a megachurch so what a lot of things that you see as Christianity that a lot of people admire people who don't have any discernment the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace so I explained a little bit of that what that peace means and the other is joy and the Holy Spirit of peace produced by the Holy Spirit and third is joy righteousness peace and joy so righteousness that comes from God if it is really from God will produce peace in my heart it'll give me a peace in my conscience 24 7 let me just emphasize that in Acts 24 and verse 16 the Apostle Paul when he was giving his testimony before Felix he said I do my best acts 24 16 to keep my conscience always at peace before God and before men blameless you will not allow even a small prick to come in his conscience he'd settle it immediately like Jesus said when you come to pray if you remember that somebody's got something against you you go and settle it immediately before you pray I don't know how many Christians practice that that's what it means to pursue peace with all men and he said I keep my conscience absolutely clear peace inside and he says that is how I know for sure where's 15 acts 24 15 I will be in the resurrection of the righteous righteousness and peace are come together here also if I have peace in my conscience acts 24 15 and 16 I will be in the resurrection of the righteous there is another resurrection that's going to take on take place later and that's called in Acts 24 15 the resurrection of the wicked so listen to this what Paul says I know there's going to be two resurrections there are going to be two resurrection one the resurrection of the righteous and the other resurrection of the wicked and he says in view of this because I want to be in the resurrection of the righteous I keep my conscience free from anything that pricks me before God and before men 24 7 always yeah I can say that's the way I seek to live and you should be you should have that testimony too but as soon as you hurt somebody you'll ask his forgiveness if it's your wife or your husband you hurt ask forgiveness immediately and if you haven't forgiven someone and it comes to your mind forgive that person immediately you can't remove the memory from your mind but forgive and wish the best for that person that's peace in your heart and your conscience so righteousness and peace peace is a mark of the righteousness of God and joy in the Holy Spirit this feeling of that I'm not good enough I'm not good enough condemning ourselves and getting discouraged is not from God there's nothing spiritual about it you know when we speak about judging ourselves we speak a lot in the church about judging ourselves it said it says in 1 Peter chapter 1 Peter 4 that people who belong to the household of God judge themselves first 1 Peter 4 17 the time has come for judgment to begin with the household of God that part I'm also part of that judgment must begin with me first it must begin with us first in the world people put themselves first in everything others are second me and my family first except in judgment in judgment the worldly people put others first I'll judge him judge all the other people around me myself no last or never but in all other things I'm first that's how it is in the world that's because the world is upside down when we get converted we begin to stand right side up and when we get right side up we are to let other people have first place in everything except in judgment in judgment we put ourselves first but how do we do it it's not by looking inside and you know scratching the mud and dirt inside say is there anything there no it's by looking unto Jesus we run the race not looking inside that's the way to be depressed that's the way to come last in the race but looking unto Jesus we can win the race Isaiah when he saw the glory of God that's when he got convicted you don't see what is inside by looking inside you do you see what's inside by looking at Jesus I must never take my eyes away from Jesus he will show me all that I need to see about myself and he will show it to me in his own good time because it might overwhelm me if I see the amount of corruption in my flesh so he shows me a little at a time so that I can cleanse it away it's like the Canaanites in the land of Canaan I mean if all of them had come up at the Israelites together the Israelites would have been defeated but the Lord allowed them little by little you kill a few Canaanites here occupy that territory and kill a few more there and occupy theirs that's Christian progress so joy in the Holy Spirit

there's no place for discouragement in the Christian life not for a single moment I believe it's completely wrong to be discouraged and I'll tell you why because God is always on the throne things may not be going in your life as you wanted to but has God vacated his throne no how does the Bible command us it is a command not a suggestion there are no suggestions in the New Testament holy commands and here is a command rejoice in the Lord Philippians 4 for rejoice in the Lord 24 7 always just like we saw X 24 16 I keep my conscience at peace 24 7 I must rejoice the joy of the Holy Spirit which is a mark of the kingdom of God 24 7 now how is that possible when circumstances are made it may not be going very well for me okay he's not asking you to rejoice in your circumstances in the Lord he doesn't change your father is still running the universe and he's got all Jesus but all authority in heaven and earth that has never changed that's why we can do it always I can if I'm rejoicing looking at my circumstances or my state of my physical health or how I feel this morning because with a sleepless night or something no it doesn't matter if everything around me seems to be going wrong I ask is the Lord still on the throne is God still is my father still running the universe is Jesus still have all authority right now yes I rejoice in that and these other minor things the Lord will sort out if I seek his kingdom and his righteousness first these other things that I need will be sorted out will be added to my God will supply all your need it says later on in that verse you seek God's kingdom first and Philippians 4:19 my God will supply all your need will sort out those problems in the way that it'll work to make you more like Jesus I believe that I'm not saying that we shall live in a world without problems no God allows problems to exist to make us more like Christ and the great apostle Paul was given a thorn in the flesh thank God he doesn't tell us what it is I personally believe it was a sickness that he had but it could apply to any thorn in the flesh any type of problem you pray pray pray and God doesn't take it away he said this is gonna make you humble this is gonna make you more like Christ well Paul said then fine I'm not gonna ask you to take it away I'll accept it I live with it till the end of my life because I want to be like Jesus so it's a wonderful life if I seek the righteousness of God and how do I know I'm having the righteousness about not my own there will be peace in my heart 24-7 they'll be rejoicing in the Lord always there will be no place for self-condemnation oh I'm not good enough I'm not good enough etc I thought of that day before yesterday when Santos was speaking to the churches young people in the churches in the south of India I spoke about the importance of joy I thought that is very appropriate message you guys should listen to it it's on the internet with a Tamil translation of how is it it's something that a lot of Christians don't think about as necessary part of our Christianity we think that's an optional extra like the ice cream at the end of the meal but even if you don't have it I've had a full meal no it's not the optional extra it's not the dessert it's the main meal righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit joy is part of the main meal of the Christian life that's the kingdom of God if you don't have it there's something missing in your seeking the kingdom of God so I must always check myself am I seeking seek the kingdom of God first seek for righteousness in every area recognize your need for it be poor in spirit hunger and thirst for it seek for peace in your heart at all times settle all things with God and man immediately and don't let anything that happens in the world around disturb you because your Heavenly Father knows the hairs on your head knows every little detail and don't hanker after something which God is not being pleased to give you is it right for a young girl to seek for marriage right for a young man to seek a good partner yes but if you keeps hankering after it to such an extent that you lose your peace then you have gone too far to look to look for us you know a certain age comes you want to get married it's perfectly okay but I believe it's wrong to hanker after it in such a way you'll end up marrying the wrong person you have to calmly committed to God and say Lord you know my need you said in Philippians 4:19 my God will supply all your need according to his riches and crises don't lose your peace because of that there's so many things like that make you lose your peace maybe you you want to move into a better house or something good I don't know you lose your peace over something like that and don't ever lose

your joy no matter what happens God is still on the throne and he cares for his own and he's promised to provide all our need and he's promised to make everything work for our good and he's promised never never to allow us to be tempted beyond our ability why shouldn't we have peace and joy in the Holy Spirit all the time by faith in in the Lord Jesus I want to get rid of a righteousness that I think I have which makes me full of unrest and discouraged and gloomy I don't want that I'm the righteousness of God the kingdom of God which is righteousness and peace righteousness through the Holy Spirit peace through the Holy Spirit and joy through the Holy Spirit so if any of you find a lack in your life let me conclude with this say Lord Jesus I want you to fill me with the Holy Spirit I really long for this not for an experience I want the Holy Spirit bringing righteousness in every area of my life peace in my heart all the time completely undisturbed and joy no matter what happens in the way get what I want I don't get what I want I want to count everything on earth is rubbish compared to the righteousness of Christ let's bow our heads in prayer so heads about in prayer dear brothers and sisters ask God to show you not in a way that condemns you but show you what area you need to deal with in your life God can show you other people may know nothing about it even your husband or wife may not know but if God shows you something just say yes to God Lord I agree with you I agree with you this is my need Lord nobody knows it but you know it I want you to help me I want to take this seriously from today onwards I want to seek the kingdom of God first have you been pursuing other things in the earth first till now well good now with that same earnestness seek for the kingdom of God now first and I believe he will grant your desire because it says blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness they will be satisfied Heavenly Father we believe you have plans for us for our good and for our welfare but you also said that we will seek you and find you only when we search for you with all our heart we want to be wholehearted all our days until we see you face to face help every needy person encourage those who are discouraged today Lord comfort those who are weary or worn out or self condemnatory encourages all we pray in Jesus name Amen

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