

We're hitting pause on our Galatians Series for 2 weeks

DON'T GIVE UP ON JOY

If there is one thing the enemy wants to rob us of, it's our joy and our hope.

- ⊙ **A while ago we observed some tight rope** walkers doing their thing at De Waal park. They have about a half a meter clearance, if they fall, no big deal.
- ⊙ But what if you tight rope walking over a canyon with no harness?
- ⇒ Has anything changed about the activity, or the level of difficulty? No, they only difference are your surroundings, if you take your eyes off the rope, you may just freak out.
- ⇒ This is what the enemy comes to do. All he needs to do is to take our focus off of Christ and onto our surroundings, and he's got us.

- ⇒ **The longer I walk with Jesus**, the more I see that those who suffer often have secret access to JOY
- ⇒ **While Satan** tries to make the most of suffering in our lives, I suspect that he secretly hates suffering. He's simply seen it draw too many people closer to Christ.

(The book of Genesis tells us of the story of Joseph who was sold into slavery by his brothers, and over many years of suffering was raised up the 2nd most powerful man in Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. When a famine strikes the land, his brothers come begging supplies and they realise that they're standing before their brother.)

GEN 50:18-21 Joseph Reassures His Brothers

Josephs brothers come before him and realise who he is

18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. 19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. 21 So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.

- ⇒ **After so many years of suffering, God raised up Joseph and blessed him. What the enemy intended for bad**, God intends and uses for the good, to accomplish his plan and bring people into salvation.
- ⇒ **The apostle Paul was the most amazing man.** He went through so many trials and yet he maintained Joy.
 - The apostle Paul was imprisoned time and time again.
 - He was beaten with Rods, pelted with stones,
 - shipwrecked 3 times
 - Spent a day and a night in the open sea
 - Often food deprived
 - In danger from Robbers
 - Often went without sleep

- Knew what it was like to literally be cold and naked

And yet he consistently rejoiced, and found joy in his circumstance

2 Cor 6:10 *as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, yet possessing everything.*

⇒ **Tonight's** message isn't about finding the answers to our hopelessness, but about remembering to abide in the joy and hope that we have in Christ. That all is not lost, when we think we've lost perspective, and we look down and we gasp saying: hugh...when fear so easily enters our hearts its because we've taken our eyes off the giver and sustainer of all things.

3 QUICK THINGS TONIGHT:

1) YOUR SOUL WILL BE SATISFIED

Let's look at King David quickly, He was running for his life in the desert, and yet look at what he writes

*My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,
when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night. (Psalm 63:5-6)*

- **While his life** was threatened by enemies, his soul was satisfied by what the eyes of his heart could still behold: **God**. He feasted on all that God was.
- **No author** in the Bible speaks more about joy than him. He wrote the majority of the language we use about joy in God, and yet, he spent much of his life running from men who wanted to kill him.
- **Perhaps the abundance of our joy** is related to the depth of suffering that we endure, and who we focus on through it.

2) YOU WILL BE WELL FED

When David wrote about his soul being satisfied, what was it that he saw?

He hadn't met the Messiah yet, but he tasted what Jesus has become for us. He says: in verse 3-4: *"Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands"*

When you've seen God's goodness, you know it. It's undeniable. David knew where his safe place was.

- ⊙ **When you're in trouble** or being chased, where do you go? HOME?

Satan actually helps to deliver us into God's hands.

David was miles and miles from the temple, but God had made him a sanctuary of worship in the wilderness — a sanctuary with walls of safety and wells of satisfaction. David's comfortable life was ripped apart, but his joy remained.

- © **Story about ending the fast**, how normal food wasn't as satisfying anymore. Our deepest desire can only be met by God. Our deepest hunger is a spiritual one.

3) HE'S YOUR SANCTUARY IN THE WILDERNESS

Real joy in God does not always look or feel full. Just a few verses earlier, while David's heart aches with sadness and anxiety, he cries out *with joy* in his anguish, he says in verse 1: *O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.*

So, is David starving or feasting in Psalm 63?

Don't cover up pain, don't suppress it. Sometimes we're told to 'man' up and be strong, when we're hurting. Real joy doesn't have to be put-together and smiley.

- ⇒ **It's been in my life's biggest trials**, that God has drawn me into his presence, into his sanctuary. In my biggest moments of fragility and vulnerability that God reveals who I really am and what matters most. Because it's in those moments that I'm most dependant on him.

Our need for him in the hardest day glorifies him as much, and even more, than our delight in him when all is well. Expect to see more of him when you have less to hold on to here.

Paul had a sanctuary in which he found his joy. Check these excerpts from Philippians:

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus... For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain... make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, untied in spirit, intent on one purpose... Do all things without grumbling or disputing... Finally, brothers, rejoice in the Lord... forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus... Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!"

<p>Every other religion says "live as you ought and God will accept you." Christianity says you receive God's acceptance and blessing as a free gift of faith on the basis of Jesus' record, not your record, and then you can live as you ought. Total reversal!</p>
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CLOSE

- © **In the movie called: The Pursuit of Happiness.** Chris Gardner is a salesman who finds himself selling bone density scanners to make ends meet. Over time, after one bad fortune after the next. His wife leaves him because he can't provide for the family and she leaves their son with him too. After trying and trying, he hits more bad luck and eventually ends up on the street with his son in a place of hopelessness. Over time he manages to land an unpaid internship to be a

stockbroker. He's one of 20 interns who are all vying for one job. After a life of suffering and pain, I'd like to play you the closing scene:

--- PLAY ---

Sometimes, in our place of suffering, we can view God as management, who wants to call un into his office and fire us, tell us we've failed. But we've missed it. God calls us into to love us, to approve of us, and to lift us up. This is the joy we experience.

His boss asks him a question:

"Was it as easy as it looked: no sir it wasn't "

- **When you're worked for his approval**, it gets tiring, and you need to come to the place where you can receive his love and his joy. Your work will never lead to joy, only frustration.

As Chris walks down the walkway, his life is changed. He expresses his happiness, but it's not an excessive expressionate joy, it's a joy that has come out of pain, out of trials and testing.

Is this life as easy as it looks? No, but God is so good, and so faithful and he's waiting to affirm and approve of who we are, not what we do. This is the source of Joy.

⇒ **You know why we can go to God?** Because he knows what It means to suffer. He sent his song to suffer and take our place.

Tonight, God is inviting you to come before him and receive. To know that he is good We either sink into self-pity, or we allow Him to lift us up into Joy, into Victory.

You know where the secret of Joy lives? Phil 4:12

Phil 4:12

I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.

Where do you find yourself tonight? What's your joy meter on?

The question I have for us tonight is this? What have we been focusing on? Has our perspective been tarnished? Have we been looking at the news, at what our friends are saying. Have we taken our eyes off his word, have we stopped conversing with God. Have we given up and chosen to see him as a distant God who isn't too interested in who we are?

"Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." [Matthew 10:29-31](#)

Respond tonight