Pastor Richard Allen Farmer

The Crossroads Church

5587 Redan Rd.

Stone Mountain, GA 30088

Series- Immanuel: God With Us

Part 3: God With Us in Joy

Text: John 15:1-11

The preceding verses of the passage speak of a *relationship*, an abiding. It is the *relationship* that produces the joy. It is the *relationship* that keeps the joy bells ringing.

“Simply put, Biblical joy is choosing to respond to external circumstances with inner contentment and satisfaction, because we know that God will use these experiences to accomplish His work in and through our lives.” - Mel Walker, contributing writer to [christianity.com](http://christianity.com)

The Greek word for joy is *chara* (khar-ah’). It means *cheerfulness, calm delight, gladness.*

The word has not been seen in this gospel of John since 3:39. However, here in the Upper Room Discourse, the word *chara*, is used frequently (15:11[twice]; 16:20, 21, 22, 24; 17:13).

This admonition to receive Christ’s joy, and walk in it and have it remain in us, comes immediately after a section about obedience (v. 9-10). Some people think that living a life of obedience to God and living a life of unbridled joy are in opposition to each other.

No. The life that is yielded to God *produces* joy. Obedience *leads to* joy. Even Jesus, our example, saw those two stances as complementary together. Did you see it in this text? Jesus says, in verse 10, that His has been a life of obedience to His Father. Then, without breaking His thought, Jesus says that He wants His followers to experience the same abiding joy that *He* has experienced.

During this Advent season, I urge us all to examine our relationship with Jesus. Is it one of joy and gladness and delighted surrender? Is it one of dull, gray, heartless obedience to laws and rituals and rules?

May I tell you what the Baby of Bethlehem wants for us? I offer three observations from verse 11.

1. The Baby of Bethlehem desires us to open ourselves to the **gift** of God’s joy. If I were to hand you a stylish/elegant pen as a gift, would you then try to pay me? No. You would simply accept the gift.
2. The Baby of Bethlehem desires us to know permanence and stability in our union with Him. He wants us to experience not some seasonal joy but, rather, a joy that **remains**.
3. The Baby of Bethlehem desires that His joy in us be **complete**, full, to capacity.

The joy offered by the culture in which we live, is a shallow, trivial, empty, not-complete emotion and experience. Jesus offers a fill-me-up experience, in which His character is placed in us and we know His full joy!!

Jesus received His joy as a direct byproduct of His union with His Father and invites us to the same.

**Closing**

I close with a passage in which Jesus articulates the source of His sense of mission and purpose.

John 4:32-34

**32**But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

**33**Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”

**34**Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.”

Do you hear it? Jesus derives His sense of purpose and calling and fulfillment and fullness, from a relationship with Father God. Jesus is nurtured and sustained by His relationship with His Father. It is Jesus’ food!

And you? And I?

We may have the same.

Immanuel: God with us in JOY!!!!

**Illus.**

Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., was a member of the U.S. Supreme Court for 30 years. His mind, wit and work earned him the unofficial title of "the greatest justice since John Marshall." At one point in his life, Justice Holmes explained his choice of a career by saying: "I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers."

Are you looking joyless?

**Illus.**

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| Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in the slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.  C.S. Lewis. |

Amen