



CONNECTED - JOY (SERMON SERIES FROM JOHN 15)

(From 10/22/17 sermon - Spencer)

I. **OPEN** - See if there is anyone who wants to share a short testimony, or if there are there specific praise updates or victories that someone might want to share.

II. **PRAY**

III. **READ TOGETHER** John 15:1-12 - *(Our emphasis for this week is found in v 10-11)* **1**"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. **2**Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.**3**Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. **4**Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. **5**I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. **6**If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7**If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8**By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. **9**As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. **10**If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11**These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

**Be sure to take time to slowly walk through this passage, preferably having a Bible teacher provide context and overview.*

Q - Sermon takeaways from those who were in attendance? (Spend time receiving reflections from those who were in the service.)

IV. **REFLECT**

As we continued with our **Connected** series using John 15, we were reminded on Sunday that the Lord desires for us to experience true JOY...a joy that can only be found in Him and that the world cannot steal from us. This was Jesus' final discourse before being crucified, and throughout chapters 13-17 we see Him pouring out His heart and giving us all that He has to ensure that we're fully equipped. "These things I have

spoken to you” is a gentle reminder that He is Lord of heaven and earth but that He longs to communicate with mankind...that He wants to be heard and understood...that He wants us to truly understand the ways of the Kingdom. He says my words will be your words, my love will be your love, and my joy will be your joy. God is always generous in giving of Himself to us. And one of the last things we hear from Him? That His JOY will be found in us and that our JOY will be full. But as we see throughout these verses of John 15, the JOY (along with all of the other fruits) comes as we abide in Him. We can no more conjure up JOY than we can conjure up peace, or love, self-control, or any of the other fruits of the Spirit.

C. S. Lewis writes in ***Surprised by Joy*** about his lifelong search for joy and how that he could never find joy in his own intellect or in anything this world had to offer, but he at last found it in His understanding of God’s love for him and the truths of the Gospel. Like Lewis, many of us have spent a good part of our lives looking for such joy as well. Part of our homework this week was to think about all the different ways we ***fill*** our lives with shallow and/or empty endeavors. **What are these “shallow and/or empty endeavors” that try to suck us in? List them on your individual sheets. Now read 1 John 2:15-17 and discuss our individual lists in comparison with the list found in this passage. Discuss.**

*Read as a group Hebrews 12:1-2. Notice in v.2 that it was because of “the JOY set before Him” that Jesus endured the cross. Compare this passage with 2 Cor 4:16-18 and Acts 13:50-52.

Q - In light of these verses, think about the bigger picture...the eternal perspective that should produce JOY in us and enable us to endure worldly trials, tribulations, and crosses. **Discuss.**

V. FURTHER APPLICATION -

Read Ps 73:25 - The two things mentioned in this verse are “Who” (people) and “nothing” (things) that we often look to in order to satisfy us and fill our needs. Douglas Wilson once said that “If you’re trying to live a happy and fulfilled life then that’s why you’re not.” His point was that we aren’t supposed to seek after joy or peace, rather, we’re supposed to seek first the Kingdom (Matt 6:33) by obeying the Lord, and if we do...if we abide in Him as the True Vine...that all that we need, including joy and peace, will come to us unexpectedly. Jesus says in John 15:10 that we abide in His love and make ourselves recipients of His joy and love when we obey His commandments. Are there commandments of God that you have chosen to not obey that needs to be repented of? Spend some time in reflective prayer asking the Lord to search our hearts.

VI. BE ON MISSION - At the beginning of this lesson we discussed how that Jesus is always generous to us...that He is always giving of Himself. In what ways can you give of yourself to Him and to others this week (time, helps, financial resources, etc.)?

VII. LOOKING AHEAD-

We encourage all CG members to continue reading, praying, and worshipping through John 15 each week.