

SERMON NOTES

Date:16/06/2024

Preacher: Sam Toms

Sermon Title: - Pilgrimage – Walking in the Spirit - Joy

Bible Reading: Acts 16:16-34

Sermon Notes -

- 1) The paradox of pursuit (we gain Joy not by seeking it directly)
- 2) The problem – we want Joy but struggle to obtain, maintain it
- 3) Acts 16:16-34 – Joy in the Pain (prison)
- 4) Joy found in Purpose
- 5) Becoming a people with God's purpose

Small Group Questions/Discussions –

Understanding Joy vs. Happiness:

Reflect on a time when you experienced happiness and compare it to a time when you felt deep joy. What were the differences in your experiences?

How can we differentiate between joy that comes from God and happiness based on circumstances?

Why do you think joy is often found indirectly rather than through direct pursuit?

How can we shift our focus from seeking happiness to finding joy in unexpected places, as Paul and Silas did?

Paul and Silas were able to sing and pray despite their suffering. How do you think their purpose in God influenced this response?

In what ways can we cultivate a similar attitude in our own challenges?

One thing we see in scripture is that Joy is often and commonly the by-product of a deep and strong 'God' inspired purpose:

What purpose has God placed in your life that gives you joy and motivates you?

How does aligning with God's purpose help you face difficulties with a joyful heart?

Get Me Out of Here!

Have you ever been in a situation where running away seemed like the easiest option? How did you respond?

How can we develop the strength to see God's purpose in challenging situations instead of seeking escape?

Reflect on a time when you felt "captive" in a situation. How did you see God's purpose during that time, or how could you see it now in hindsight?

How can recognizing God's purpose in our current situation change our perspective and bring joy?

Using the boat analogy, which role do you identify with (crew, passenger, stowaway, pirate) in your current walk with God? Why? (The Passenger has the right purpose, but isn't contributing, the Stowaway hasn't got purpose and isn't contributing but is focused on the final destination – heaven, the pirate contributes a lot but has a different purpose to the captains, The Crew are hugely contributing and have aligned purpose with the captain)

How can you transition to being part of the "crew" and experience the joy that comes with fulfilling God's purpose?

Practical Application:

What steps can you take this week to seek God's kingdom and His righteousness first in your life?

How can you support each other in your life group to pursue God's purposes and find joy together?

Prayer Points:

Pray for a deeper understanding of God's purpose in each member's life.

Ask for the strength and faith to find joy in all circumstances.

Support each other in seeking God's kingdom and righteousness above all else.