

“The Power of Joy”

Zephaniah 3:14-20; Philippians 4:4-7

December 12, 2021

Advent Joy

- Things get dull over time, don't they?
 - o I remember the first time I made a really great omelet.
 - They're harder to do than you might imagine
 - I worked hard, not the most coordinated person in the world
 - Man, was I happy.
 - o Now, I can practically bang out a cheese omelet with my eyes closed.
 - While that's not, it doesn't make me happy.
 - o Second time you watch MOST movies, they get a little less enjoyable
 - You see plot holes, bad acting, the second time through.
- Happiness needs novelty, newness otherwise it ceases to make quite as happy.
- Most joyful feeling in the world
 - o Ryan story – reading letters
 - o There was a lot going on in my life at the time
 - Wasn't happy at church I was serving
 - Other struggles of life
 - BOOM JOY
 - Saw his, became joyous
 - o Reminded me of the whole sweep of the Christian story
- Joy is always, well, joyful!

Differences

- Happiness is. Feeling generally tied to exterior things, joy is more of an inner satisfaction.
- Happiness can be achieved singularly, joy requires another participant (God, other people, etc.)
- Happiness can be synthesized
 - o Big Macs make me pretty happy
 - o Dan Gilbert (2014) made a big deal about synthesizing happiness.
 - It's a way to convert it to joy but, well, have you heard of either synthetic happiness or Dan Gilbert?
 - It can't be done consistently without a Christian worldview
 - o Why?
 - Hope falters without an understanding of The Kingdom.
 - There are somethings from which happiness cannot be synthesized WITHOUT an understanding of God.

Finding Joy in the Happy Season

- December is an interesting month, isn't it?
- For a season which celebrates the Prince of Peace, there isn't much peace in it.
 - o Busier
 - o Crazier
 - o Expensive
- It's easy to lose sight of the big picture and find our joy diminished.

Cultivating Joy in a World of Happiness

- Make time for it
 - o December is the worst, right?

- Carve out time to just reflect
- PRAY and Meditate on the Word in the Morning
- Be in service for others
 - Ryan Story
 - Best of all, find a way to use your God-given gifts to do so.
-
- Practice Gratitude
 - LIST ALL THE THINGS YOU'RE GRATEFUL FOR
 - Go granular
 - Look at that list – JOYFUL MUCH?

The Power of Joy

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer
 - “The joy of God goes through the poverty of the manger and the agony of the cross; that is why it is invincible, irrefutable. It does not deny the anguish, when it is there, but finds God in the midst of it, in fact precisely there; it does not deny grave sin but finds forgiveness precisely in this way; it looks death straight in the eye, but it finds life precisely within it.”
- Finding Joy in the Midst of Suffering
 - Jim Guin
 - Nancy Palmer
 - Mary
 - Dying, JOYFUL
- Watching the kids Band Concert
 - Raising kids is tough
 - Moments like that, where you see the kids working hard, having fun and making music are JOYFUL events
 - Sheldon and Emily - BONUS