

Livin' the Life
Joy in the Supremacy of Jesus Christ, part 12
John 3:31-36
January 14, 2018

We continue our series in the Gospel of John, "Livin' the Life" today." For those of you who are new, we do expository preaching here, explaining each passage as we move through a book of the bible. We do this because we are committed to preaching the bible. This is different than topical preaching where you have a topic in mind and then look to the bible to justify or support your topic. The two are very different. Expository preaching seeks to understand what God has already said and then brings that word to preaching. Preaching mediates the voice of God in the presence of God by the Spirit of God. Today we are looking at "Joy in the Supremacy of Jesus Christ," in 3:31-36. In this passage, we see the reason for John the Witness' joy in the crowds streaming to Jesus.

First, Jesus is supreme because of his heavenly origin (31). Jesus comes from above, from heaven, pointing to the fullness of deity dwelling in him (Co 2:9). We have already been told that "the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son of the Father (1:14)" and why Paul says, "seeing the glory of God in the face of Christ (2 Co 4:4)." There is an infinite gulf between Jesus and John the Witness, "who is of the earth, belongs to the earth, and literally, speaks of the earth (3:31). He is heavenly and we are earthly; He is the Christ and we are common humanity; He is the Savoir and we are sinners; He is divine and we are depraved; He is infinite and we are finite. Jesus has no equal! This is why John found great joy in the crowds streaming to Jesus but his disciples were jealous and why he said that Jesus must increase and he must decrease. Then to reinforce this point, John says that because Jesus is from heaven, he is above all. Again, Jesus has no equal! Joy is found in seeing the supremacy of Jesus, that is, he is everything and I am nothing.

Second, Jesus is supreme because he speaks the words of God (32-34). Jesus witnesses to the truth, testifying to what he has seen and heard (1:1-2). Jesus does not teach what others have taught or said but he speaks for God as God. Yet no one received or believed his testimony. The greatest truth humanity needs, we reject because we are blind and deaf to the truth. This gospel keeps telling us that the problem with fallen humanity is that we are earthly, finite, and corrupted by sin (1:10-11; 3:11-12). Yet "whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true (33)." Because our natural impulse is to reject Jesus' testimony, believing requires a work of God (1:11-12; 3:5-8). Sin has so corrupted human nature that it requires God's intervention for us to see, to receive, to believe. Joy is found in recognizing the supremacy of what Jesus says as the answer to my sin and then repent and believe. Now John gives us the reason his testimony is true. "For he whom God has sent utters the words of God (34). God the Father sent the Son from above, who is also God (1:1-2). They have a deep and unique intimacy with one another, the Father is in him and he is in the Father (14:11). They also have a deep unity with one another, the Father and the Son are one (10:30). They are so intimate and united that their words are one. Thus, Jesus' words are life giving words, they are spirit and are life (6:63). They are both life producing and life sustaining. He speaks the words of God *for* or because he was given the Spirit without measure (34).

God gave his stamp of approval when he gave Jesus the Spirit to fulfill his mission. Jesus had the fullness of the Spirit as the God-man. Jesus, as to his human nature, was empowered by the Spirit to live sinlessly and fulfill his mission as the Messiah (1:32-33). Yet as to his divine nature, Jesus still related to the Spirit uniquely, still in communion with the Father and the Spirit as the triune God always had. And Jesus' human nature had access his Divine nature by the Spirit as God saw fit for him to do so. There is a teaching today that says that when God became man, he functioned purely as a man, empowered by the Spirit to perform miracles. But this is far too simplistic and even contradicts Scripture. Jesus at times, acted out of his humanity, but at other times out of his deity (20:31-31; 1:14; 2:11; Jn 10:33; Mat 9:2-3). Joy is found in seeing the supremacy of Jesus in God's word.

Third, Jesus is supreme because he is uniquely loved (35) Jesus is the Eternal Son with whom God loves with pleasure and delight, “this is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased (Mat 3:17; 17:5).” God has enjoyed the Son from all eternity, who is the perfect reflection of his own image, the perfect reflection of his own essence, the perfect imprint of his own nature, and the perfect form of his own glory (Heb 1:3)! The love and pleasure God finds in himself is his love and pleasure in the Son. Because he is uniquely loved, he has a unique status and privilege, “all things have been given into his hand (35).” This is why Jesus says at the great commission, all authority on heaven and earth has been given to me (Mat 28:18). Joy is found in seeing the supremacy of God’s love for Jesus, for myself.

Jesus is supreme because he divides eternity (35) John now draws a conclusion on the supremacy of Jesus. Because Jesus is supreme, eternity is divided between those who are promised eternal life and those warned about eternal wrath. One person believes and has eternal life and another person disobeys, refuses to believe in Jesus remains under God’s wrath. John rejoiced greatly in the supremacy of Jesus, Jesus increasing by streams of people coming to him for eternal life. Believing in Jesus is seeing Jesus as supreme. Pursuing the supremacy of Jesus in your life brings joy and eternal life.

The alternative is not obeying the Son, rejecting the supremacy of Jesus, and you will not see life and God’s wrath remains on you. Just as eternal life is a present reality, God’s wrath is a present reality, it remains on him. Refusing Jesus leaves you under his wrath. This present wrath is a display of God’s love because it is a motive for repenting and believing. God’s wrath in this life is redemptive and tempered with God’s love in drawing and calling people to believe. But there is a future wrath that is very different and is the display of God’s holiness against sin that will result in eternal torment. And the threat of God’s wrath is what motivates God’s mission, calling people to repent and believe.

Questions for Life Groups:

1. What is one thing in life, outside of Christ, that brings you great joy? Why?
2. What does it mean to see Jesus as supreme?
3. How does Jesus’ supremacy impact my daily life?
4. What does it mean to see the supremacy of Jesus in God’s word?
5. What does this mean for my daily life?
6. How does God’s love for Jesus mean for his love for me?
7. Why do you think John makes the contrast believing in Jesus and disobeying Jesus in verse 36?
8. What does it mean to remain under God’s wrath?
9. What was the distinction David made between God’s present and his future wrath?
10. How is God’s wrath a motivation for mission?
11. What does it mean to repent? Why is repentance so critical to salvation and the Christian life?
12. Is repentance a daily routine in your life?
13. Why is it important to daily repent and believe Christ for overcoming sin?
14. How does daily repentance relate to a gospel centered life.

