

Joy Redux – Psalm 16

16 Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge. ²I say to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.” ³As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. ⁴The sorrows of those who run after another god shall multiply; their drink offerings of blood I will not pour out or take their names on my lips. ⁵The LORD is my chosen portion and my cup; you hold my lot. ⁶The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; indeed, I have a beautiful inheritance. ⁷I bless the LORD who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me. ⁸I have set the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices; my flesh also dwells secure. ¹⁰For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption. ¹¹You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

“Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in the word and in the world.” -John Piper

- 1. A)** What does it mean to approach God with honesty rather than pretence in our prayers?
B) Are you ever hesitant to approach God with your fears, frustrations or messy emotions?
C) What types of prayers have you been praying lately?
- 2. A)** When faced with hardship and filled with fear, where do you immediately look for refuge?
B) What are some ways that we might- perhaps subtly- run to people, possessions, or methods of escapism for refuge, even if we profess faith in God?
C) How did David find joy in remembering the salvation of the Lord and running to Him?
D) Why is there great joy in admitting that we have no good apart from God?
- 3. A)** What about the Church and the Christians in your life gives you joy?
B) Why has God called us to be part of a people, not just scattered individual believers?
C) What is the mission God has given to the saints in the land?
D) What is the difference between living as a casual observer/consumer of the life of the church versus an active participant?
E) How might God be calling you to be the church in the world right now, especially given the way we are currently required to function?

As for the saints in the land, they are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight. -Ps.16:3

For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” -Romans 10:13-15

- 4.** The worship of false gods kills our joy and leaves us emotionally dry, and spiritually empty.
A) Some questions to help identify possible idols in our lives:
Where does my mind go when it is free?
Who’s approval do I seek most? Who’s disapproval is most devastating to me?
What am I pursuing right now that I think will make me complete?
What am I most fearful of losing?
Who or what do I look to when things are tough?
Who or what am I prepared to compromise my beliefs for?

B) If we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good, that the living water he offers is all-satisfying, why do we still reach for other things?

but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” -John 4:14

5. **A)** How does it make you feel to know that the God who spoke the world into existence holds your lot- that He knows the number of hairs on your head (Luke 12:7) and has every day of your life written in His book (Ps.139:16)?
B) Why is it significant that God’s presence fills the whole earth- that He is, in a very real way, present in every circumstance- pleasant and difficult?
C) What does it mean to be full of sorrow and yet rejoicing?
D) How can we be in pain yet experience joy in the presence of God?

O LORD, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O LORD, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it. Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? -Psalm 139:1-7

6. **A)** What does it look like to cultivate an ongoing and deepening awareness of the presence of God in my life and the world?
B) How does that change our perspective on day to day circumstances and inject us with a steadfast and joyful hope?

“If you want to get warm you must stand near the fire: if you want to be wet you must get into the water. If you want joy, power, peace, eternal life, you must get close to, or even into, the thing that has them. They are not a sort of prize which God could, if He chose, just hand out to anyone.” -C.S Lewis

7. **A)** How does the resurrection of Christ change the way we think about death?
B) The greatest joy and pleasure we experience in this life is simply a pointer to the infinitely, unimaginably greater joy and pleasure we will experience in the presence of God for all eternity. How does that move your heart? How does that change the way we live here and now? How does it change the way we share our faith with others and reflect God in the world?

You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore. -Psalm 16:11

O Christ,
All thy ways of mercy tend to and end in my delight.
Thou didst weep, sorrow, suffer that I might rejoice.
For my joy thou hast sent the Comforter,
multiplied thy promises,
shown me my future happiness,
given me a living fountain.
Thou art preparing joy for me and me for joy;
I pray for joy, wait for joy, long for joy;
give me more than I can hold, desire, or think of.
Measure out to me my times and degrees of joy,

at my work, business, duties.
If I weep at night, give me joy in the morning.
Let me rest in the thought of thy love,
pardon for sin,
my title to heaven,
my future unspotted state.
I am an unworthy recipient of thy grace.
I often disesteem thy blood and slight thy love,
but can in repentance draw water
from the wells of thy joyous forgiveness.
Let my heart leap towards the eternal sabbath,
where the work of redemption, sanctification, preservation, glorification
is finished and perfected for ever,
where thou wilt rejoice over me with joy.
There is no joy like the joy of heaven,
for in that state are no sad divisions, unchristian quarrels,
contentions, evil designs,
weariness, hunger, cold,
sadness, sin, suffering,
persecutions, toils of duty.
O healthful place where none are sick!
O happy land where all are kings!
O holy assembly where all are priests!
How free a state where none are servants except to thee!
Bring me speedily to the land of joy.

-The Valley of Vision