

Philippians Sermon Series: An Exploration of Christian Joy

Sermon-based Small Group Guide - Week of Sunday, January 6th

Sermon Title: The Biblical Condition of Joy

Scripture Texts: Matthew 28:7-9, Romans 5:1-5, Psalm 95

Welcome

Greet everyone as they arrive and check in with one another. Provide refreshments if possible.

Introduction

- If this is a new group, please make sure to spend time introducing everyone.
- Give an overview of the Sermon-based Small Group model (see attachment) and the Philippians Sermon Series (see attachment)
- Remind everyone of the need to commit to attendance on Sundays and to the small group meetings but let them know that sermons are available online in text and audio format if needed.
- Briefly go over the Guidelines for Healthy Small Group participation. (see attachment)

Discussion

Story Questions

These are designed to be beginning discussion questions that instigate recall of the sermon and personal identification with it. You might want to just choose one of these.

John talked about his sister as an example of joy while she went through a battle with cancer. Can you think of someone who has exuded joy despite difficult circumstances?

As you listened to the sermon what stories in your life were you reminded of?

What negative circumstances have you had that have overshadowed your mood for an extended period?

Sermon Content Questions

What was the one thing that stuck with you from the sermon?

What struck you about John's explanation of the differences between happiness and joy?

How do you differentiate between happiness and joy?

What was meaningful to you from the sermon? Was there anything you disagreed with?

Scripture Exploration

Ask your group to imagine being one of the women who went to Jesus' tomb, discovering it empty and being immediately instructed to go and tell others that Jesus is alive. Tell your group to listen for emotions as you read the scripture passage. Read Matthew 28:7-9

⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him. Now I have told you.'

⁸ So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him.

What emotions did you notice?

How did the women respond in the midst of these emotions?

What else did you notice in this passage?

How can fear and joy coexist?

Have you ever been afraid and joyful at the same time?

Why do you think the passage was chosen to begin our series on Christian Joy?

Ask your group to listen for the word rejoice and words or concepts that relate to it as you read the next passage of scripture. (Rejoicing is an act of choosing joy.) Read Romans 5:1-5

¹ Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

When are we suppose to rejoice / have joy? How can suffering and joy coexist?
What makes it difficult to choose joy when you are suffering?

Digging Deeper

What is the reason for joy?

How does a church manifest joy? What does joy look like in a church?

Application Questions

What will you do this week to allow God to create joy in your circumstances?

How can you remind yourself of the wonderful gift of joy? What helps you receive it?

Application Activities

Internalizing God's Word (Connect with God)

Ask each person to choose a word or phrase from the Romans passage that is meaningful to them and say it to the group. Ask your group to make a habit of repeating this phrase to themselves throughout each day. Have them write down their word or phrase on a 3x5 card and post it in a place where they'll see it frequently.

Journaling (Connect with Self)

Identify current circumstances that are difficult. Make a list of ways you can choose joy in the midst of this.

Sharing the Joy (Connect with Others)

When God redeems us from "the grimy," we dance with Him. Who do you want to invite to the dance with God?

Reminder: ALPHA starts this week on Thursday. This is one opportunity for inviting.

Prayer

Read Psalm 95 together as a prayer. See the attached sheet for a responsive reading format. There are sections for 2 solo readers as well as all to read in unison.

Prayer for one another according to what was shared during the discussion time.

Quote

Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy . . . and keep choosing it every day. - Henri Nouwen

Sermon-based Small Groups

What is a Sermon-based Small Group?

Small groups made up of 3-12 people who meet weekly to discuss scripture and support one another in applying God's word in their lives. The meeting for each week is based on the scripture text and sermon from the previous Sunday using a Sermon-based Small Group Guide that is created by a group of small group leaders. Each group is facilitated by a trained leader. Meetings last about 1 ½ hours and include time for building community, discussion, and prayer. Participants are expected to read the weekly scripture and hear the sermon before the meeting. (Sermons are available online if Sunday worship is missed.)

What is the benefit of the Sermon-based Small Group model?

This model enhances the effectiveness of the large group worship experience by unifying the congregation in an ongoing, common dialogue with God through his word. Also, in a culture that tends to fragment us, this model encourages individuals toward focus and depth - creating space for God to transform us. This model works well for both new and mature Christians.

What is the required commitment?

Participation in a Sermon-based Small Group is a 10-week commitment. Requirements are reading the weekly scripture, hearing the weekly sermon, weekly attendance at the small group meeting, and showing a desire to grow in ones Christian life. Group members are also expected to abide by guiding principles for healthy small group participation. At the end of the 10-week series participants have the choice of staying in the same group, trying a new group, or taking a break.

How do I get into a Sermon-based Small Group?

Pick up a yellow registration card from the Information Table in the Fellowship Room or the Small Group Bulletin Board in the Reception Room. Fill it out and put it in the basket on the table, the envelope at the bulletin board or in the Small Group mailbox in the main office.

Can my existing small group become a Sermon-based Small Group?

Yes! Contact Brenda Norton at brendan@spokanefpc.org or 747-1058 x220

More Questions?

Contact Brenda Norton at brendan@spokanefpc.org or 747-1058 x220

Philippians Sermon Series: An Exploration of Christian Joy

Date (Sunday)	Preacher	Sermon Title	Scripture Text	Paul for Everyone pages
10-Week Series				
1/6/08	John	The Biblical Condition of Joy	Ps 95, Mt 28:7-9, Rom 5:1-5	
1/13/08	Kevin	Who are these guys?	Phil 1:1-2	
1/20/08	John	The Joy of the Trajectory	Phil 1:3-11	83-86
1/27/08	John	The Joy in Christ that Transcends Circumstances	Phil 1:12-29	87-96
2/3/08	John	The Joy of the United Body of Christ	Phil 2:1-2	97-99
2/10/08	John	Christ's Example of Humble Service	Phil 2:3-11	100-103
2/17/08	John	The Joy of Obedience	Phil 2:12-30	104-113
2/24/08	Kevin	The Joy of Letting Go	Phil 3:1-10	114-120
3/02/08	John	The Goal of Citizenship in Heaven	Phil 3:12-4:1	121-127
3/09/08	John	From Joy to Peace, Through Thankfulness, Strength, Goodness and Grace	Phil 4:2-23	128-137
Holy Week				
3/16/08 Palm Sunday	Kevin			
3/20/08 Maundy Thursday	We will be having a Maundy Thursday worship service between the usual Thursday Night Live dinner and classes. Please encourage your group to attend dinner and worship.			
3/23/08 Easter	John			

Guiding Principles for Healthy Participation in Small Groups

Respect others different points of view, even when we disagree

COMMUNITY

Listen with open-mindedness and sincerity of heart

AUTHENTICITY

Stay in discovery mode, being trustworthy and fair together

INTEGRITY

Rely on God, not ourselves, to reveal His truth through prayer and study of the scriptures

HUMILITY

Stay centered and mature, even if others lose control; trust God in every situation

HOPE

Preserve relationships through love, balance, grace, and truth

COMPASSION

Through prayer, give thanks when we have open dialogue

GRATITUDE

When we practice these principles, we acknowledge our accomplishments

CELEBRATION

http://www.solanapres.org/CEDocuments/Downloads_GetFile.aspx?id=188975&fd=0

Psalm 95

Person #1:

- 1 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord;
Let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.
2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song

All:

- 3 For the Lord is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
4 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

Person #1:

- 6 Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;

All:

- 7 for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

Person #2:

- Today, if you hear his voice,
8 do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah,
as you did that day at Massah in the desert,
9 where your fathers tested and tried me,
though they had seen what I did.
10 For forty years I was angry with that generation;
I said, "They are a people whose hearts go astray,
and they have not known my ways."
11 So I declared on oath in my anger,
"They shall never enter my rest."