

HEART OF CALVARY



Demonstrating God's love to people, helping them to be healed from their hurts & set free from bondage, so they can be equipped and trained for ministry to bless generations!

August 2016

Count it all Joy!

Sermon by David Broom paraphrased by Becky Curtis

Note: We've had a series of sermons on Joy recently, so I thought it might be time to do a newsletter with that theme. For those of you who missed David Broom's message and for those of you who were blessed to hear it, I felt it was worth putting in print. I have taken the liberty of transcribing it with only slight editing for space considerations.

James 1:2-5 (NKJV) ²*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. ⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

Trials are a joy to be going through. Perils produce patience and patience produces perfection. Strong's definition of patience is: *the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.* Patience allows us to see where we are going and to stay on track to hit the mark for where God want us to be.

Trials produce that characteristic. We think that trials are there to knock us off course, but we need to shift our understanding to know that difficult times come to increase our ability to stay focused on the goal that God has for us. So many people get knocked off course when things get bad. We have got to remain faithful and patient, remaining focused on the goal to reach our destiny. The difficult times that we go through create patience in us that gives us the characteristic so we are not swerved from our deliberate purpose. We have to know what that purpose is.

You have to know why you are here. Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,*

"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹²Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. God knows the why. The key is verse 13. If you want to know God's incredible plans for you, it's about getting in His presence long enough to know what those are. God has great plans for you - plans with a good outcome. The journey may not be smooth, but the outcome is good. God says, "I have a great outcome for you. If you want to know what it is, you must seek Me." If you seek, you will find.

We have to spend enough time with the Lord to know the "why" we get up every day. If we do that, patience will develop. One of the other definitions of patience is: a cheerful or hopeful endurance.

The movie *Inside Out* is about a little girl facing the challenge of moving to a new city. In the movie, her brain is depicted as a control panel that manages how she views and reacts to the world she's in. She has been given four primary emotions: joy, sadness, fear, and anger. Any of these can be at the control panel at any time and her view of the world and how she reacts depends upon which emotion is managing the control panel. When joy is manning the panel, everything is great and even fearful shadows become fun playthings.

Most of us don't make decisions out of our intellect. We make them based on our emotions. James is saying to count it all joy. You get to decide who is going to run the control panel of your life. So when you wake up on one of those really bad days and joy starts out in control, then you burn the toast so frustration takes over, then your car battery is dead because someone left the dome light on, making you

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late for work so anger takes control; but James says you have the right to change that. When you go through difficult times, you can decide to let joy run the control panel. Emotions should not be allowed to govern our lives. You don't get to stay in anger. If we can learn to put joy in that position for the vast majority of our lives, the joy of the Lord will be the strength that we need to go through the difficult times we face.

It's not the difficult times that shape us. It's how we respond to them that defines us. It is how we react that defines who we become. James is saying that you get to count (calculate) your response. If you put the right emotion in charge of the control panel, you can change the outcome of what is happening, not because the circumstances change, but because the circumstances don't have to govern the outcome of your life. If you allow patience to have its perfect work in you, you become perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

The word "perfection" means to lack nothing. The reason most of us don't like trials is that we believe they have come to take something away from us. They've come to take our time, our money, or our relational collateral. James is saying, "No, trials didn't come to take anything away from you. They came to make sure that you would lack nothing." Trials are actually here to enhance you, not to diminish you. If we could see our challenges and trials as things that are coming into our lives to actually add to us, rather than to take away from us, it might be easier for us to decide who is going to run the control panel of our lives.

In John 16:33, Jesus says, *"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."* Every one of us is going to face trials and storms, but we have nothing to fear.

Let's look at four kinds of storms in the Bible.

1) The first storm is the flood in Genesis. The reason for this storm was to cleanse the earth. This storm comes to remove the stuff that is getting in the

way of your relationship with God. If you are in a storm, ask God if this is the reason. Is there something blocking your relationship that needs to be removed?

- 2) In I Kings 19, Elijah has just triumphed over the prophets of Baal, but becomes afraid when Jezebel threatens his life. He runs and hides in a cave. Storms come and he hears God in the still small voice. Can you slow down enough in your busy world to hear God's still small voice? Sometimes the storm is there to teach us how to hear in that moment.
- 3) In Matthew 14, Peter steps out of the boat in the midst of a storm to walk to Jesus. Some storms come into our lives to teach us to walk on water. They are there to enlarge our faith and increase our capacity to trust God. Count it all joy to be in the midst of this storm.
- 4) In Mark 4:35 - 5:20, Jesus is asleep in the boat during the storm. So if God gives you direction, sends you off, and things go well for a while, but then it gets rough and it feels like He's asleep in the boat, just stay the course. When you are using a GPS, it only speaks to you when you need to change course. If it is silent, you are on the right track. Don't mistake the silence of God for His absence. Sometimes storms come to find out if we will stay true to the cause and stick it out to the end. Sometimes storms aren't there for you, they are there to get you to where someone else needs you to be for God to move in their life. Immediately after Jesus woke up and calmed the storm, they were at their destination. They met the Demoniac of the Gadarenes and Jesus delivered him. The storm had taken them straight to him. The storm had nothing to do with the disciples, it was to get them where they needed to be so Jesus could do what He needed to do.

Whatever the storms are in our lives, let us find out from God, "Why am I here?" We need to find out what we are doing in this storm so we can get what we need from it - so we can count it all joy.



In Your presence is fullness of joy
Psalm 16 11



PEGGY'S PONDERINGS

LOOKING FOR JOY? DON'T MURMUR IN THE MIDNIGHTS.

Do we murmur in our midnights? Whine in our wildernesses? These questions marched through my mind as I read Exodus 15 and 16. God's people begin their journey from captivity to the promised land, and after witnessing God's awesome deliverance from their enemy, they rejoice with great jubilation in song and dance. LIFE IS GOOD! JOY ABOUND!

But in days to come, they began to veer from the direction of their promised land and found themselves in a wilderness void of water. Listen, what is that noise rising from the camp fires, floating upward toward the heavens? Ah, is it not the whispers of whines in the wilderness flung from throats parched with thirst? LIFE IS BAD! JOY IS GONE. Does the parching come from the lack of water or from the murmurs in the midnight? I wonder?

God heard their murmurs and provided waters that flowed sweet down their dry throats. An oasis of blessing appeared...Elim's springs of water, abundant sustenance, and rest. LIFE IS GOOD! But wait! What is that sound? Silence? Where was the rejoicing with great jubilation in song and dance for God's provision? LIFE WAS GOOD, BUT WHERE WAS THE JOY?

They came at length to the Wilderness of Sin which was located between Elim (Provision of God) and Sinai (Promises/Words of God). Finding themselves trudging through this wilderness, a small familiar song began to waft on the midnight breezes. Its crescendo grew. Ah, now the words become distinct, recognizable...murmurs in the midnight. LIFE WAS BAD! JOY WAS GONE.

God heard their murmurings. (Exodus 16:9) And He provided. Ah, Manna! LIFE WAS GOOD! But, once more...the sound of silence. No singing. No dancing. No JOY.

PROVISION—LIFE WAS GOOD—SILENCE. Once again the music of murmuring began. The whispers of wicked ungratefulness made their way toward the throne of Almighty God. How long, O God? How long will You listen to these murmurings from Your people? How long will Your mercy and grace enfold them in Your heart of Love? How long until they learn to sing songs of gratefulness and JOY? Or, foolish people, will they never learn?

Oh, how like these children of God we are. We find ourselves in the wilderness of dryness, the darkness of fear, and our song becomes rift with the lyrics of the "lord of the flies." The words begin as soft sighs and hissing whispers, but soon swell into whirling waves of insinuation and ugly suspicion that our Father's promises, His precious words, are not true, and our JOY is gone.

We murmur in our midnights, our travels through lands of dryness. We embrace lack and unbelief in God's ability to keep us, to hold us, to provide for us—while He, in His infinite love, "holds forth the very word of life" that could bring joy to us. (Philip. 2:16)

Do we recognize this word of Life, this Bread from heaven, this JOY from Jesus? Or do we, like the Israelites, call out, "Manna"? What is it?) (Exodus 16:15) Do our souls cry out and leap for JOY at the goodness of our God when we read that even though our ungrateful murmurings come before the Lord, He in His compassion and mercy still provides us Bread from heaven?

Do we hear Him when He tells us to "take as much as we need?" Do we really listen? Or are we in too much of a snit about our circumstances to gather what is so freely offered during our "seasons of snitfulness"?

Are we so focused on our fear, so languishing in our perceived lack of provision that we can't see the proverbial forest for the trees? The veritable feast our Father has laid out before us, even in the very presence of the enemy?

Are we so satiated in our seemingly impossible situation that we fail to heed, in our misery of doubt and mistrust, our Father's gentle voice calling us to take up and eat the manna He has provided? To taste and see that He is good?

Oh Lord—that we would learn to give no credence to the call to disbelieve Your word—that we would learn to not listen to the taunting voice of hell urging us to whine in the hard places—that we would turn from the enemy's words tempting us to ignore the Holy Spirit's voice, Who is within, urging us to turn away from our vain imaginations and skepticism of Your promises to never leave us or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5)

Help us cross over from our wanderings in the land of confusion and doubt and plant our feet firmly back in Your kingdom of belief and trust. Open our eyes and cause us to see the Manna, the Bread from heaven, the Word of Life, the JOY You so lovingly hold out to us in our times of trouble. (Exodus 16:32-34)

Father God, cause us to remember Your faithfulness, and let us never leave our place of rest in You and Your promises. (Exodus 16:30) Remind us to dance and declare Your faithfulness when we are in our deserts. Teach us, in our perilous times, to turn our murmurings in the midnights into songs of praise for Your provision...music of gratitude for Your manna. Then we will experience Your JOY!



CHURCH Picnic

Sunday, August 14th 6:00 PM
Hawthorn Park (Burkeybyle Shelter)
Meal at 6:00
Baptisms in the lake after the meal.
Bring 1 or 2 sides or desserts to share.

Ladies



The next Ladies' Meeting will be **Saturday, December 3, 2016**. Verna Davis, the Joy Lady, a columnist in the Saturday Tribune newspaper, is going to speak, and the door prizes (give-aways or take-aways) this time will be jewelry.

So gals, start going through your old jewels for something to donate.

Joy emanates out of the abiding sense of God's fierce love for us.
 ~Margaret Feinberg

you have made known
 to me
 the paths of life;
 you will fill me with
JOY in your
 presence.
 psalm 16:11

choose



Joy and laughter are the gifts of living in the presence of God and trusting that tomorrow is not worth worrying about.

Seven Ways to Litter the World with Joy

- 1) Smile at the people you see.
- 2) Radiate grace.
- 3) Sing or hum throughout the day.
- 4) Place an exclamation point on today.
- 5) Write a note of blessing to someone you love.
- 6) Do something you love.
- 7) Strike up a conversation with a stranger.

You are going to splash something wherever you go.

Why not make it joy?



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