**BETTER TOGETHER** in 2022

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**Into the Mystery**

**The Mystery of Joy**



Joy is a shared human **experience**.

Over time, our sense of joy can be **lost**.

**Have you experienced a joy that is fleeting?**

*A* ***cheerful heart*** *is good medicine, but a* ***crushed spirit*** *dries up the bones.* ***Proverbs 17:22***

There is a joy that does not **last**, but another joy that is **steadfast**.

The joy that does not last is tied to **circumstance**.

If you only experience joy on your best days, you have not yet tasted the best joy. We tend to think of joy as a light and fleeting feeling that comes and goes as life allows. But the best joy is strong enough for the realities of life — all of life.

The joy that is steadfast is tied to **Jesus**.

The world cannot give it; man cannot give it; it is only found in Jesus. The joy Jesus offers is abiding joy, durable joy, full joy. It is His joy!

**Joy** – An inner gladness stemming from steadfast assurance that God’s is in control.

God desire is that everyone experience everlasting, abiding, complete joy.

Jesus wants us to have **His** joy, in order to make ours complete.

*These things I have spoken to you,* ***that******my joy may be in you****, and that* ***your joy may be full****.* ***John 15:11***

***Count it all joy****, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds,..* ***James 1:2***

***The mystery of real joy*** *is that it is not dependent on* ***circumstances*** *or* ***comfort.***

***For the joy set before him*** *he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.* ***Hebrews 12:2***

Jesus’ joy is **available** to all.

If you want joy that last…

1. Place your faith in **Jesus**.

*Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.* ***John 15:3***

1. Stay connected with **Jesus**.

*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*

***John 15:4-5***

*As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.* ***John 15:9***

1. **Obey** the words of Jesus.

*If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.* ***John 15:10***

1. **Love** others the way Jesus loves you.

*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

***John 15:12-13***

You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another. **John 15:16-17**

Joy in Jesus is **certain** **victory**.

His joy makes us **strong** in the midst of difficulty.

*And do not be grieved, for* ***the joy of the Lord*** *is* ***your******strength****.* ***Nehemiah 8:10***

**Guard your joy!**

Guard your joy by watching out for joy stealers!

Guard your joy by His Word.

Guard your joy in prayer.

Guard your joy through obedience.

Guard your joy by rejoicing in the Lord.

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.*

***Hebrews 12:1-3***

* Can death take your joy? No, because Jesus has defeated death.
* Can betrayal take your joy? No, because Jesus will never leave you.
* Can sickness take your joy? No, because God will heal you on this side of the grave or the other.
* Can disappointment take your joy? No, because though your plan may not work out, God will orchestrate your steps and work things together for your good.
* Can failure take your joy? No, because Jesus is greater than your sin.

*For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.* ***Romans 8:38-39***