

Community Group Discussion Questions

“The Fruit of Joy”

Galatians 5:22-23, Romans 5:1-11

Sermon Series Title: “The Fruit of the Spirit”

Sermon Series Summary: In Christ, we have received new hearts and new life. With this new life, God bears the Fruit of the Spirit. It’s not something we do. It’s something that God grows within us through His Spirit.

Setting: After looking at the works of the flesh, Paul lists the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5. Romans is the greatest theological letter that Paul wrote. Leading up to Romans 5, Paul talked about our need in chapters 1-3 because of our sin, and then he talked about how God meets that need through justification by faith alone in chapters 3-4. In chapter 5, we see the benefits of our justification.

Summary: The second fruit is joy. Through Romans 5, we see that we are called to have joy even in suffering, because our hope has been secured for us by Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross for our sins. We are able to have joy ultimately, because Christ has made us His joy.

Central Truth: *“We can have joy, because our hope has been secured in Christ, who made us His joy.”*

Sermon Points:

1. What is joy?
2. What does it look like?
3. What is it found upon?

Opening Question

1. Have you ever encountered a joyful person? Describe him/her.

(Answers may vary.)

Joy is the second fruit that is listed in Galatians 5. We will take a look at Romans 5 to see the heart of joy.

Read Romans 5:1-11

Community Group Discussion Questions

2. How would you define joy? Is there a difference between joy and happiness?

(Joy is steadfast contentment, rooted deeply in the hope of Christ. Pastor Tim Keller defines it as a delight in God just for the sheer beauty and worth of who He is. The opposite of joy is hopelessness and despair. And the counterfeit of joy is elation or optimism that is based on circumstances, blessings, or the self. It is not rooted in anything eternal.)

There is a difference between happiness and joy. Happiness is temporary and circumstantial. It is usually based on earthly treasures and will die with them. It is just a feeling that comes and goes. But joy is rooted in the eternal, mainly God Himself. And nothing can take that joy away.)

3. Is it sinful to be depressed? Why or why not?

(The opposite of joy is not sorrow. It is hopelessness and despair. Joy is not the absence of sorrow, but joy is gladness in the eternal hope of Christ. We see many instances in the psalms of when they were sorrowful (Psalm 28, 42), but they still had hope in God. And with hope, there was joy.)

We are not called to fake it until we make it. That can lead to counterfeit joy. Instead, we are called to embrace our brokenness, tears, doubt, despair, and sorrow. We bring ourselves naked before the Lord and cling to the hope we have in Christ.

There is a biological component to our depression as well that we need to recognize. God has created us in both body and soul. They are connected to one another, and we need to make sure we don't neglect one over the other in terms of our emotional state.

With all that said, we cannot make a rash judgment by saying that all depression is sinful or all depression is not sinful. It is a complicated issue that requires much wisdom, processing, and prayer. Just like our other emotions, I believe depression can have sinful roots. But it can also be righteous as an expression of the brokenness of our body, heart, circumstances, and life with its root being the hope of Christ.)

4. Do you have joy currently? Why or why not?

(Answers may vary.)

Community Group Discussion Questions

5. What sustains our joy as Christians?

(For us to have joy, it needs to be rooted in the eternal, in God Himself. But how is this possible when we are weak, sinful enemies of God? It is through the finished work of Christ. He is the One who has reconciled us to God. He is the One who has secured for us our place in the family of God. He is the One who took on the ultimate death, so that we may have life eternal.

The sustenance of joy is not found in the pursuit of joy as the ends. The sustenance of joy is found in the pursuit of Christ and joy follows. We must bring ourselves back to the love of God in Christ that secures for us our eternal hope.)

Final Thoughts: *Joy is not the main goal but the fruit that the Spirit bears within us. Joy comes when we are deeply rooted in the eternal, immovable hope of Christ. This hope opens the door for us to have joy even when we experience sorrow, loss, and depression. It's not a false optimism or a passing elation. It is steadfast contentment, deeply rooted in the hope of Christ. And we are able to have this joy, because Christ first made us His joy.*