

“THE MISERABLE CHRISTIAN LIFE”

John 15:11-17

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INTRODUCTION

Life can be tough, can't it? Health, jobs, marriage, family, government, personal enemies—we have to face a lot of “stuff.” **ILLUS: Leaving Pinal County Building and Development Dept. on Wednesday.**

The real question is, *does God also make it tough on us*—does He add all kinds of spiritual pressures upon us in order to get us right with Him, does He punish us severely for minor infractions, is He unreasonable in His expectations for us, does He expect us to “stress out” over every small failure, does He constantly “badger” us over our faults, does He expect us to be so introspective and naval (belly button) examiners that we cannot relax and enjoy life, does He desire for His people to look as though they have been sucking on a pickle through a barbed-wire fence?

Now, please do not misunderstand me—I am not at all minimizing the necessity nor the importance of holiness and godly living for the believer! But I am convinced that we often blame God for our sour dispositions and for our negativity in life! We are so persecuted, and the Lord is so hard on us!

However, the reality is that the Lord wants us to have **Fullness of Joy!** (v. 11)

YOU MUST EXPERIENCE THE FULNESS OF CHRIST'S JOY.

In this passage the Lord shows us His Plan for our joy, and Our Practical Application of His Joy.

I. THE LORD'S PLAN FOR OUR JOY (11)

Verse 11 gives us the reason [Notice “these things I have spoken”] for all of the Lord's precepts for us in this chapter—why we need to abide in Him (vv. 4, 5), in His Word (v. 7), in His love (vv. 9-10); why we must bear more and much fruit (vv. 2, 4-5, 8); why we must pray effectively (7); why we must prove to be His disciples (v. 8).

A. He Desires that His Joy Be in Us!

The joy that is His, and that He gives to others—cf. His peace in 14:27.
This joy is the result of His wholehearted obedience to His Father.
Compare Hebrews 12:2—“Who for the joy that was set before Him...”
In Us—that is in our hearts—governing all of our attitudes and actions!

B. He Desires that Our Joy may be Fulfilled—complete, total.

The Christian life is not a cheerless life!

- *What is it that you allow to steal your rightful joy?*

- *Jesus Himself wants you to have this joy!*
- *Life is too short to allow anything to keep us from His joy.*

II. OUR EXPERIENCE OF HIS JOY (12-17)

A. You will have Joy by loving the brethren. (12)

- See 13:34—His “new commandment”
- See 15:10—His commandments here are boiled down to one: **To be continually loving one another.**
- He set the example for this love by the way He loved His disciples.

B. You will have Joy by Accepting His love and following His example. (13-14)

1. Jesus has manifested His love for His disciples—His “friends”. (13)

Compare Rom. 15:10—He loved and died for his enemies.

Here He has in view His friends—those whom He called and who were following Him.

“For” means literally “*on behalf of*” or “*in the place of.*”

He shows them how He loves them (v. 12).

To die for someone is the clearest evidence of one’s love.

2. His disciples manifest their friendship by obedience to Jesus’ command—especially His command to love. (14)

- They must stand for and defend—to the death if necessary—each other.
- Of course, they must be willing to die for their Lord.

C. You will have Joy by experiencing His friendship(15).

1. Not merely His slaves—compare 13:13-16

Slaves not given confidential information

2. Now His Friends

- He has made known to them all that His Father has given to Him.
- He has kept back nothing that they need to know.
- This is not a contradiction of John 16:12
- Contrast with the less personal relationship of the OT believer.
- He has told His friends *why He was sent, why He would die, why he would leave, what He would do when He returns, and How to be saved.*
- This does not mean that we are no longer His servants: Paul regularly calls himself a servant of Christ—Romans 1:1; Phil. 1:1; Titus 1:1.

D. You will have joy by fulfilling His purpose for choosing you (16).

- The **choice** here can refer both to their *election* as individuals, and to their *special selection* as disciples/apostles.
- Notice that God chooses His disciples; contrary to the regular pattern of a disciple choosing his master/teacher in Judaism.
- The contrast here is stark: **Not YOU chose me, BUT I chose you.**
- Compare v. 19—He chose them out of the world.

1. He has appointed us (set us apart); same word used by Christ in v. 13 for Him

“laying down” His life (soul) for His friends. Implication that we must be willing to lay down our lives if necessary! **Thus Jesus “set aside His life and set them to their work.”** So He does with us.

2. He has given us a mission—“That you should go.”
Often John refers to Jesus’ mission.
3. The Mission involves the “bearing” (continuous) of fruit—cf. vv. 2ff.
 - This fruit is primarily godly character qualities (Gal. 5:22-23; see above)
 - This fruit in this context must include winning of souls and discipleship.
4. The fruit is to **remain**—abiding fruit both in their lives, and in their converts.
5. The mission will include answered prayer
 - Prayer to the Father
 - Prayer “in the name of” the Son
 - Such Prayer guaranteed an answer. (Cf. 14:13; 15:7)

E. You will have joy by continuing to love fellow believers (17)

Notice the emphasis upon this command at the beginning of this section (v. 12), in the middle of the section (14), and at the end (v. 17).

CONCLUSION

When I was a young believer, I remember a song:

“If you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy, let Jesus come into your heart. . . . Your sins He’ll wash away, your night He’ll turn to day, your life He’ll make it over anew. If you want . . .”

The Lord wants you to have joy—HIS JOY.

And He wants you to have FULL JOY.

Do you have it, or are you letting the adversary take it from you?

What excuse do you have for not having His joy?

- The text makes it clear that you will have His joy if you practice **loving fellow believers, accept His deep love** and enjoy **His special friendship**, and **fulfill His purpose for choosing you.**
- Along the way you will bear fruit that remains and will see answered prayer.

It is time to claim your heritage of joy in the Lord!

If you are not a Christian, you need to be saved! Why not now?