

The Christmas Gifts

Week 3--Joy

Texts: Romans 5:1-11

Ice Breaker

What is one thing that brings you joy at Christmas? What is one thing that robs you of your joy at Christmas?

Processing Truth: Romans 5:1-11

Now that you've had a few weeks to dive into Romans 5:1-11 and look at the "bundle" of Christmas gifts that God gives us through Jesus, let's look specifically at joy this week through this passage and some other passages that highlight joy.

1. What stands out to you from the text? What word or phrase seems significant to you? What questions do you have about the text?
2. Where do you see the words "rejoice" and "joy" in the passage? Why should we "rejoice" or experience "joy"?
3. Read John 16:13-15 and John 17:14-15. How would you describe the relationship of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Where does "joy" fit here? (Hint: to "glorify" is to praise, honor, rejoice in the presence of)
4. Read John 15:11. What is the purpose of Jesus' teaching?
5. Read John 16: 20-24. Why does Jesus tell his disciples their sorrow will turn to joy? What will this process be like?
6. Read Romans 12:2. If we are to be "transformed" and experience joy, what must we do? What are the "patterns of this world" that would rob us of our joy?
7. Read Jesus' prayer in John 17, paying close attention to 17:13. What does Jesus want for his disciples, including us?

Applying Truth

Choose one or more of the following sets of questions to discuss in pairs, other groupings, or whole group. You can talk about understanding the big picture "theology" of joy in question 1 or go right to the direct application questions.

1. Think about the "big story of joy" in the Bible, like this
 - God is Father, Son, Holy Spirit living in perfect community of mutual glorification, love, and joy
 - The creation of the world is an extension of that perfect community. God wasn't lonely and needy.
 - The sin of Adam and Eve and our own sin separates us from that community
 - The Old Testament points to the coming of the one who would bring reconciliation
 - Jesus brings reconciliation through his sacrificial death and calls his disciples, while he was on earth and now, to share in his joy through our relationship with Him and our mission for Him.

How real is this story of joy for you? What is the source of your joy?

2. What are the things that rob you of your joy? What does that process look like for you? What are your feelings? What are your thoughts?
3. What step will you take this week to “renew your mind”? What will you think about? Who and what will help guide your thinking?

Personal Prayer and Reflection

Spend at least 30 minutes this week reflecting on your “joy” in Christ. Read Jesus’ prayer in John 17 and picture him praying this for you!