

The Hour

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Preacher: Cory Brock

[0 : 00] Well, we're coming somewhat towards the end of our series that we're calling the King Speech on John 13 to 17.

And if you were here last week, you'll know that we're kind of doing a two-part thing on this passage. So we looked at this passage last week, and what we did was we broke the passage down into kind of two ideas.

One is the theological lessons that are driven in this passage through Jesus, the lessons about the cross. The lessons about the resurrection. And the second part that we're looking at this week is the lessons about our personalities, the lessons about who we are, who we are to become.

And this two-fold breakdown of kind of how we're doing the sermon corresponds to the two questions that we've been talking about that Jesus is addressing throughout John 13 to 17. And the two questions are, first, He's leaving.

The disciples are anxious and perplexed, and they're saying, what is this you're saying about you leaving us? In other words, what is the cross about?

[1 : 02] That's the first question. And that's what we looked at last week. And last week we said that this passage teaches that the cross, the death, the death of the Son of God, is ultimately about resurrection.

That through death comes new life just like after winter comes spring. That resurrection has been the narrative arc of all of history. It's the centerpiece of history from Genesis to Revelation, and it's the very center and purpose of our lives, it's our only hope, it's resurrection.

Now the second question is, what about the disciples? You're leaving us, you're going to the cross, you're going to death. Now what do we do? That's the second question He's addressing.

In other words, there's kind of an embedded great commission in this passage. What are they to do? And the way Jesus addresses them in our passage tonight is He doesn't tell them what to do necessarily, but what to become, but what to become.

In other words, He's saying there's a type of person that I'm here to make you into. So you see the relationship between the two questions.

[2 : 04] What's the cross about? Well Jesus is saying the cross is about the power of the resurrection. It's the power of bringing somebody from death into life. What do we do when you leave?

You're to become a resurrected person even now. To get the power of the resurrection to become someone that you're not, to change. So in other words, what we're talking about tonight is how to become a better person.

How to become a better person. Now there's a modern way of talking about becoming a better person and it's everywhere. Become the better you.

This is the speech of late modernity. Become the better you. Become the better you. You're to be your better self. You hear athletes or celebrities or people like that say it all the time in interviews. I just want to wake up every day and become a better me.

Be a little bit better at today at whatever I'm doing than I was yesterday. Now the logic of the Bible kind of sees two ways of becoming a better person. That's what the Bible calls the natural way for lack of a better term.

[3 : 05] It's the natural ways. It's just about the will of your own heart getting up every day and trying to be the best person you possibly can be, right? But the logic of the Bible says there's a second way and that's what our passage is talking about.

There's a supernatural way. And the supernatural way says it's not so much about waking up and becoming a, you know, Corey 2.0 today.

The Bible says you actually have to leave the entire old self behind if you want to become a better you. The word Paul uses is you have to become a new self.

You have to become a new self. And the way Jesus is expressing what it is to become a new self is down to one little metaphor in this whole passage John 13 to 17. This is the culmination and the metaphor is fruit.

Fruit, you have, you have, if you want to become a new self in the way the Christian logic thinks about it, you have to bear fruit. You have to bear fruit. And so that's what this passage, what we're looking at tonight.

[4 : 10] We talked a lot about love. We talked a lot about patience. And tonight we're really focusing in on two of the fruits that Jesus introduces in this passage and that's joy and peace. So four things, brief things.

We're going to look at lessons about joy, the music of the fruits of the Spirit first, the fact of joy, the consistency of joy and, fourthly, taking responsibility for our joy.

Okay. So first thing, the music, the music of the fruits of the Spirit. Now if you've been with us, you know that Jesus has been talking about a number of things in repetition throughout John 13 to 17. One of the most important ones that we've preached two sermons on now is the greatest commandment. He leaves them with the greatest commandment, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. You shall love one another.

You shall love God and love your neighbor, agape. Right? So you remember that one. He said that one numerous times throughout. So remember that. The greatest commandment, love one another, agape one another.

[5 : 14] The second thing that he keeps repeating numerous times is abide in me. I'm leaving you, he's saying to the disciples, you see the logic. Now you're going to have to abide in me when I'm gone.

Now they have no idea what that means yet, but abide in me. You see what he's saying? You're going to have to be patient and faithful because I'm leaving. You abide in me.

I'm leaving. You're going to have to be patient and faithful. You're going to have to love one another. You're going to have to be patient and faithful. And now we get to this passage and in the very center he says, when I leave, you're going to weep and lament verse 20.

And when I come again, which by what he means the resurrection, you're going to have joy. You're going to have joy that nobody can take away. And then at the very end, the very end of the passage, I've said these things to you because the world is going to hate you, but in me you're going to have peace.

Now look, just listen to this list we just created. The things he keeps saying over and over again, love, joy, peace, patience, and the list continues.

[6 : 19] You could finish it with me. Kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self-control, right? You hear what he's saying? Paul in Galatians chapter five gives us what he calls the fruits of the spirit, right?

What is Paul doing in Galatians five when he lists to you what a Christian looks like, the fruits of the spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control, faithfulness. He's saying he's giving you an exposition of exactly what Jesus was preaching about the whole of John's gospel.

And look, Jesus have been talking about fruit the entire gospel. He's saying, Paul's reflecting on the fruit of the spirit. But how will you know the disciples?

You will know them by their fruit, he says. Now Paul's reflecting on this in the great passage of the fruits of the spirit. Exactly what it is you're to become by the power of the resurrection.

Jesus has given us love, joy, peace, patience so far in 1 John 13 to 17. Well, in another place Paul's reflecting on this.

[7 : 28] 1 Corinthians 13, you know, Derek alluded to it this morning. It's the great wedding passage, right, that everybody loves to read. But oftentimes, because it's a wedding, we miss exactly what Paul's doing in that passage.

At the very beginning of 1 Corinthians 13, he sets it all up with a metaphor. What's the metaphor? The metaphor that Paul sets it up with is the idea of music. And it's even bigger than just music. Paul's, you know what Paul's talking about in 1 Corinthians 13? He's talking about a symphony. He says, look, you can have all the fruits of the spirit, or you can have some of the fruits of the spirit.

You can have some of the great spiritual gifts.

You can prophesy. You can do miracles. But what does he say? But without love, you're just a noisy symbol, a clanging gong. You see the picture he's giving you.

He's saying, look, listen, without agape, what Jesus said is the most fundamental commandment. You're just banging symbols together. And the picture he's giving you is an ancient orchestra.

[8 : 25] You see, he's weaving the fruits of the spirit and the gifts of the spirit together, in other words, to try to show us that the fruits of the spirit exist in a harmony.

They exist in a sweet symphony of music that all have to be played together at the same time. You can't have the winds without the strings.

He's saying, if you've got a gift of the spirit and you don't have love, then all you've got is symbols clanging together. And that's nothing but noise. Look, here's the point.

The reason that Jesus has been talking about love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, in light of the resurrection is because what he's saying is that the person that you are to become in light of the resurrection is a person that, look, you don't just get a little bit of Jesus' patience and none of Jesus' joy or a little bit of Jesus' joy and none of Jesus' kindness.

The fruits of the spirit only work together. That's what Paul said. They only work in a harmony.

They're symphonic. They're polyphonic.

[9 : 35] They're mini-sounding, but they all come together to make a symphony. You can't get one without the other. And that's what he's saying. The greatest of all these is love. You get what Jesus is talking about in John 16, joy and peace.

Joy and peace. So the first thing is this, just the fact, the theological fact, the fruits of the spirit are fruits, gifts of the spirit, and they only come together in the form of a sweet symphony.

The form of a sweet symphony. Okay, that's the first thing. Second thing, the fact of joy and peace. Now the question that we've said like numerous times throughout the sermon series is the disciples are asking, why are you doing this?

Why are you leaving us? And the reason they're asking that, we said last week, is because, look, in the ancient Near East, the conception of Christ, which means Messiah, is that Messiahs don't leave.

Messiahs march into whatever political authority is present at the moment, and they cast down the emperor, and they insert themselves into that location, and they bring in the kingdom of the new heavens and the new earth right then and there.

[10 : 47] Messiahs don't leave, but Jesus is leaving. So they're perplexed by it. Now why? Why is Jesus leaving? We know in hindsight, but in verse 24, he gives them something of an ultimate reason.

See in verse 24, part B, ask and you will receive why. In order that your joy, your joy may be full. In order that your joy may be full. Now what does he mean by full, that your joy may be full? That your joy may be, another way to say it is that your joy may be complete.

This is a really peculiar Greek word, a particular Greek word, it's the word play Roma, and the word play Roma in all the other instances in the New Testament is a word that refers to the coming of the new heavens and the new earth.

And in sometimes the word play Roma in the Old Testament, in the Greek Old Testament refers to God's actual being, God's very attributes.

[11 : 49] God's very attributes. You see, he's not saying pray, look at the resurrection so that you may get more and more joy and some type of quantitative sense until your cup is full.

You keep pouring in a little joy and a little joy and a little joy in your cup is full. It's not quantitative. It's completely qualitative. What he's saying is that there's a way of being, a way of being in this world where a person becomes truly what they're supposed to be and therefore truly happy.

And I'm not talking about happiness as an emotion, but happiness as a state, a disposition, a way of being, what the Bible calls joy. Now what is this joy?

What is this joy? This one chapter before Jesus said, 1511, these things I've spoken to you, that my joy, my joy may be in you and that your joy may be full.

So this is the second time he said it, that my joy may be in you and your joy may be full. I was reading a book last year by a guy from Duke Divinity School named Nathan Wearsbaugh.

[12 : 51] Fantastic book. You should pick it up. Called From Nature to Creation. And it's about thinking about the natural world. And he has a lot of work in there, especially on eating, on

Christians thinking about eating.

Eating is important for Christians, right? But he tells the story that he's thinking about the book and doing some research. And he's walking down the street one day in North Carolina and he said, all of a sudden it hit me like a lightning bolt that food tastes good and it didn't have to be that way. That food tastes good. Oh, the joy of food that tastes good. Everyone of us lives for it. You can't wait to get to lunch every day. You know, I mean you live for food that tastes good and it didn't have to be that way.

Now look, the point being made here is to wake up to the reality that the same thing and even bigger, even more important, far more important than food is that this is the very same thing that's true of joy.

Let it hit over you like lightning. That Jesus just said, my joy I'm giving you so that your joy may be full. Right? And here's what he's saying.

[13:59] That by the power of the resurrection, Jesus Christ can communicate to you the fullness of God's own emotional life.

It's total and complete happiness that it can be yours. And it didn't have to be that way.

It so didn't have to be that way. This is so voluntary that Jesus said I'm going all the way to a death that I don't deserve so that you can have a joy that you never should have had.

You see? The only way he can give you the joy that is his joy is by going to a death he doesn't deserve. That's how, that's how voluntary it is. It's a fact that never had to be a fact.

Just the lightning bolt of the possibility of being as happy, happy like God. That's one of the simple points here.

[14:57] This is why Christians can't be dour people. Christians can't be dour people. Because one of the primary ways the Bible expresses God's own personality is that God is happy.

That God's happy. You know, just listen to some of these phrases I pulled from the Old Testament. Some of these appear over 50 times. Just listen to this, the joy of God, the blessedness of God, the word blessedness is a word for happiness, the happiness of God, that God in the prophets all the time takes delight in filling the object, all sorts of things.

You know, there's a scholar in the states in the Northeast named Joel Beakey, somebody you may have run across him, but he tells the story once heard of his own childhood that he grew up in a tradition, a Presbyterian tradition.

But he said that his home was just incredibly dour. It was kind of a household of kind of really strict prudishness. He said he just never really heard the gospel very much as a kid.

It was fairly kind of legal. He said that his dad had just a whole shelf, a whole bookcase of Puritan classic works, you know.

[16:21] And he said that when he was nine years old, he picked up the first book from the Puritans and by the time he was 14, he had read the whole 17th century corpus of Puritans.

Now, this is a special kid. No doubt about it. I didn't do that, I can tell you. So he did. And he said that when he was 14, he believed in Jesus for the first time.

He got converted after reading the Puritan. And this is what he says about it. He says, you know, everyone out there in the modern society thinks of the Puritans as the most dour people that have ever lived. And that's how probably many of us would think about them.

He said, these people I realized in reading them were not like me. They were the happiest people that had ever lived. No one liked them in history.

There was no one like them in all of history who had embraced Christianity as a religion for the head, the heart, and the hand. He goes on in that interview to suggest, how did they get like this?

[17:17] And he said, I didn't realize until later in life when he read a big book called Puritan Theology that the reason that the way they got like this was because he said they talked about the happiness of God all the time in their sermons.

They talked about how happy God is. Look, humans cannot not pursue happiness.

Humans can, you cannot not pursue happiness. You have to pursue happiness because you're created in the image of God and God's happy. You know, Blaise Pascal, the famous French Catholics said it this way, all men seek happiness without exception.

They all aim at this goal however different the means they use to attain it. They will never make the smallest move, but with this as its goal. This is the motive of all the actions of all of mankind, even those who contemplate suicide.

People are created to be most happy when they become like God. People become most happy when they become like God.

[18 : 23] The fact of joy. Look, if you're not yet sold on the fact that God's happy, what was Jesus like?

Why did Jesus go to the cross? For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising shame.

Christian can't be without joy because the very purpose that Jesus went to the cross was joy. And what's the joy that's being talked about there in Hebrews? What's the joy?

What's the object of his affection? If you read the passage carefully, you'll see it in Hebrews, it was you. The joy that was set before Jesus, to make him go all the way to the cross, it was you.

It was you. And you see what he's saying in this passage? I've come to give you my joy so that you may be full. You see, Jesus is never more happy than when he gets his church.

[19 : 29] And the church can never be more happy than when it gets him. That's what he's saying to us at the end of the page. The fact of joy. All right, third, third out of four.

The consistency of joy and peace. The consistency of joy and peace. Now, look, if you look at verse 20 to 22 with me, Jesus says, truly I'll say to you, you're going to weep, you're going to lament, and the world's going to be happy.

The world's going to rejoice. This is when he goes to the cross. But when I return, the world is going to weep and lament, and you're going to have the fullness of joy. Now, if you read that, you might think what Jesus is saying is that sorrow and joy are the opposites of one another.

Right? So when I go to the cross, you're going to be so sad. And when I come again, you're going to be happy. You're going to have joy. So you might suppose that sorrow can only turn into joy.

Joy and sorrow are opposites of one another. But if you go to the end of the passage when he talks about peace, 33, I've said these things to you that in me you may have peace.

[20 : 31] In the world, you'll have tribulation, but take heart. I've overcome the world. The difference, the spin that he's putting on in verse 33 is this, is this, that there's a distinction, the Bible makes a distinction between internal disposition and external circumstances, internal disposition and external circumstances in such a way that the external circumstance that you live in may be completely dour, completely terrible, absolute hell, but that the internal disposition of a Christian might be complete, resolute joy in the very midst of absolute external circumstance that looks terrible.

That's the distinction. Now look, the Bible, you know, what's a human? What's a person, right? This is the study of anthropology, the anthropos, the human, the study of anthropology.

What's a human? Now the Bible has its own definitions for anthropology, and the Bible says that a human basically is composed in its faculties of a heart and a mind.

That's the basic breakdown. I mean, you know, this is the intellect, right, you think, and then you have a heart. You love from the heart, you emote from the heart, but the Bible makes even finer distinctions than that, and Christian theologians through all of history have done a little bit more.

They've broken down the heart into thinking about the heart according to, you have a faculty of desire. You want things in life. You want to eat probably right now. You're ready for me to stop, so you can go eat.

[22 : 08] You want, you know, you have a will. You also have emotions. If you go out and get stuck behind the fringe traffic, you're going to hunger, horn and yell, and you're going to get angry, and that's your emotional register of your heart.

But a lot of theologians throughout history like Augustine have talked about a third category of the heart. And that third category is different from emotion. They call it feeling, but it's not, the difference is that emotions go up and down based on external circumstances, right?

You can get mad and then you can be happy in a moment, depending on what the circumstance is. You can, you can, you can be so angry and then so calm, right? But feeling, feeling is a disposition that underlies every single emotional situation, every single action in the world, every single thought.

It's a disposition, and that's what Jesus is talking about when he uses the words joy and peace. Joy and peace are not emotions.

This is not talking about you get, you get super happy and then super sad. It's a disposition, it's a state of being. You know, sadness is not the opposite of joy.

[23 : 22] The opposite of joy is utter despair. It's the disposition of hopelessness. And what's the opposite of peace? The opposite of peace isn't worth.

You know, you can, you can be at total peace as an interdisposition right in the midst of the most horrendous of wars. The opposite of, the opposite of peace and Christian logic is complete discontentment.

It's being completely discontent. Look, when you define peace and joy, it's almost hard to separate them. They go together, they exist in a sweet harmony, and this is what Jesus is saying with the, with the illustration of the birth, right?

So, you know, we said this last week, verse 21, when a woman's giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come. But when she, but when she's delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish for joy that a human being has been born into the world, right?

Now look, a woman's giving birth, it hurts. I wouldn't know, but that's the way here. And a woman's giving birth and it's extreme pain, and then the baby comes, and they put the little baby into the mother's arms, you know, and that's, that's the moment.

[24 : 28] If you've ever, if you've ever gotten to see that moment or be a person that experienced the moment, there's nothing like it in all the world. There's nothing like it in all the world. But mothers in here know, and probably fathers too, you know, that what Jesus isn't saying is that all of a sudden there's no more pain anymore, right?

Then you go home, then you go home, and there's weeks of recovery. You know, you set that little baby in the mother's arms and they're still pain.

The pain hasn't stopped. You see the point? Sorrow and joy exist in utter simultaneity in this life. Sorrow and joy exist in utter simultaneity in this life. Christians, when you get the gift of the Spirit as joy, Christians become the happiest and the saddest people in the whole world.

Christians are the, Christians are the, have to be the happiest and saddest people in the whole world, right? Because look, when you, before you become, if you're not a Christian, you know, generally our dispositions and sin is selfishness.

[25 : 40] Hearts of stone, Paul calls it. When you have a heart of stone, you walk around in the world, you walk around in the world completely self-absorbed. That's what a heart of stone is.

You're completely self-absorbed. And so the last thing you care about when you have a heart of stone is all the other people's problems in the world. You don't want to hear about other people's problems.

You've got enough to deal with on your own. When you, when the heart of stone becomes a heart of flesh, you know what happens to you? Self-absorption breaks and you start to turn outward from yourself.

And when you get a heart of flesh, you start walking down the street and caring about the ways of the world. You start caring about them for the first time in a way you never have before. You see, the Christian is one that can grieve with those who grieves, that can mourn with those who mourn. The Christian, the Christian goes to the funeral and cries louder than anyone. And the Christian can turn around and be more happy, more happy than anybody else ever could imagine in the midst of tragedies.

[26 : 46] You mourn with those who mourn, you weep with those who weep, you rejoice with those who rejoice. That's what the Christian does because a soft heart turns you away from yourself and you actually start to care about other people's problems.

And you care about other people's victories and you care about other people's successes. You know, there's nothing worse than for a heart of stone than when you're in a job and you want that promotion.

You want that job and a guy, a guy, a girl that you know gets it. What happens when you have a heart of stone? You hate them. You hate them.

You can't stand. You don't rejoice. You might rejoice externally, but there's no rejoicing with those who rejoice. There's mourning for yourself because you've got a heart of stone. But when you become a Christian, when you get the disposition of joy, the disposition of resurrection that looks beyond the extent of death, looks into the new world, looks, stops counting the minutes of pleasure until death, and looks to an eternal reality, you're able for the first time in life to truly be the happiest person in the world and the saddest person at the very same time.

This is the state of the Christian. This is the disposition of joy. First Thessalonians 4.13, we grieve, we grieve, but not as those without hope.

[28 : 04] Romans 5.1, we rejoice in suffering, and suffering produces hope. Jesus could look out at Jerusalem and say, oh, Jerusalem, how I long for you to come to me?

How I weep for you because you will not come to me? Jesus could stand in front of Lazarus' tomb, and the Greek word there when it says the shortest verse in the Bible, Jesus wept, is a special word for, you know, it's the gut wrenching.

I can't stop coughing. Kind of a cry, the kind of a cry when your beloved dies. Jesus could sit in the garden and say, oh, Lord, let this cup pass from me.

Let this cup pass from me. His heart was completely broken, completely broken. And it was for the joy set before him that he did every single one of those activities, you see.

Joy and sorrow for the Christian exists in utter simultaneity in this life. That means that if you're, you know, if you're like the super happy bubbly, I'm never sad kind of a person, that there might be something missing about Christian joy.

[29 : 34] And if you're the super downcast and downtrodden and always sad kind of a person, there might be something missing in your understanding of Christian joy. All right.

Lastly, very briefly, two minutes and we'll be done. How do we get that?

This is the fruit of the spirit. You see, it's the fruit of the spirit. The spirit gives it. The spirit gives love, joy, peace, patience, kindness and the power of resurrection.

You don't, and, and at the very same time, you have to go after it. And those things exist together.

At the very end of the passage in verse 33, Jesus gives them something to do.

He's been saying to them, by the power of the resurrection, you can have joy. By the power of the resurrection, you can have peace. Now take care, take courage, the way that same exact phrase is expressed in the Old Testament, the old classic KJV, KJV, gird up your loins.

[30 : 36] Gird up your loins, strap up your boots, tie them up tight. It's your response. You know, I once, I once heard somebody, a preacher, talk about, a preacher talk about how he was at a, he was at a Presbytery meeting and they were about to, they were about to induct a guy and somebody objected to it.

And the man stood up and said, you know, why are you ejecting? And he said, this guy has yet to take responsibility for his joy. He has yet to take responsibility for his joy.

You have to take responsibility for your joy. And there are two ways Jesus says you can do that.

One by thinking, by thinking the whole passage has been about the resurrection.

What are you going to do? It's a theology. The modern way of getting joy, of getting happiness says, says, it's the self-help version, right? The self-help version, the modern version says of this, clear your head.

You want to be happy? You're downtrodden with so much anxiety, with so many problems, with so much stress. Take a vacation. Clear your head, forget about your problems for a minute.

[31 : 42] Clear your head, relax. Don't worry about other people's problems. Don't worry about the world's problems. And forget about your problems and you can finally find some happiness in life. The Christian version is completely different.

The Christian version doesn't say clear your head. That's the dumb way of getting happiness. The Christian way is the smart way. The dumb way says, ho ho ho to the bottle I go, as Mary and Pip and Sing at the green dragon and Lord of the Rings.

Ho ho ho to the bottle I go, to forget my woes, right? The Christian way says, confront exactly what the world is, who you are, and what everything around you is.

Exactly what it is, in its curse, in its death, disaster, and destruction. And confront it with nothing less than faith, hope, and love. If you try to avoid the reality of what the world is, you won't find happiness.

But the great irony of happiness in this life is that the only way to do it is to confront the very problems of the world with Christian hope, with the hope of the resurrection. That's what Christian joy is. Secondly and finally, the other thing that he tells us to do in this passage is he says, ask in my name and you will receive the fullness of joy.

[32 : 53] Now, it's cliché. It's cliché. The last point I'm going to make is, how do you get this kind of joy? This resolute joy, the joy that Paul could say, in all my tribulations, there is an eternal weight of glory that far outweighs them.

Now, Paul's tribulations were snake bitten, ship wrecked, put in prison multiple times, beaten to the point of death, and tried for an execution.

That was his tribulation. It's cliché. Every preacher ends on this point. You got to pray. Look, we're bored by that application.

I know. But look, here's the thing about prayer. Prayer isn't just what Jesus says it is here. It's not just asking God for something and getting it from Him.

When you pray, it actually changes you. Just the very activity of prayer changes you. It makes you, a seminary professor of mine said, prayer makes you into humble confidence.

[33 : 57] Humble confidence. That's not a, it's a paradox. Humble confident person. You're humble because prayer, the very activity of entering into prayer, decenters yourself.

It's the very activity of decentering. You're saying, I don't have the solutions. I'm going outside of myself. I'm decentering. It's the position of humility. The more you pray, the more you become like, the more you become humble.

And at the same time, it recenters into something outside of you. It recenters in God who gives you confidence. It's the hope of the resurrection. It's the humble confidence.

Love, joy, patience, peace, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control. They go out, that person goes out and weeps with people who are crying. It rejoices with people rejoicing how?

Because they're humble confident. They're humble confident. That's the person you have to become. It seek, seek, and you will be found, and you must be found in order to seek.

[34 : 56] It's a paradox. You have to take responsibility for your joy, and you have to get your joy as a gift of the Holy Spirit. And those exist at the very exact same time.

C.S. Lewis, we'll close with C.S. Lewis in this. He wrote this in a letter to Sheldon Van Alken at the end of his life. It's a Christian duty, as you know, for everyone to be as happy as they can be.

It's a Christian duty. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for the word. We thank you for the fact of joy, Lord. We couldn't imagine what it would be like to live in a world that happiness wasn't a possibility. You created happiness. You created joy. So we ask that you would help us to see that joy is a great gift, an end, an ultimate end.

It's the disposition of seeing Jesus face to face. And so give us that sweet gift even now as we await the coming of the Lord. And we ask for this in Jesus' name.

[36 : 01] Amen.