

Why joy?

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

What brings you joy? What takes away your joy?

How can joy be commanded...always??

- ¹⁶ Rejoice always,
- ¹⁷ pray continually,
- ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

RA

PC

GTIAC

FTIGWFYICJ

4 periods of human history
and 3 great works of God

Creation

Fall

Redemption

Christ's 1st coming: humility, death, resurrection

Re-creation

Christ's 2nd coming: glory, judgment, grace, resurrection

"in Christ Jesus" = praying with bold hope in Re-Creation and His 2nd coming

The Big Idea

In Jesus Christ

**all of life is a journey home
to glory with God forever**

What are we to do?

Rejoice always...in Christ

"Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: ... sorrowful, yet always rejoicing..."

2 Corinthians 6:4, 10

"set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming." 1 Peter 1:13b

Pray continually...in Christ

Constantly recurring prayer, growing out of continual dependence upon God

"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete."

John 16:24

"Abba, Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

Mark 14:36

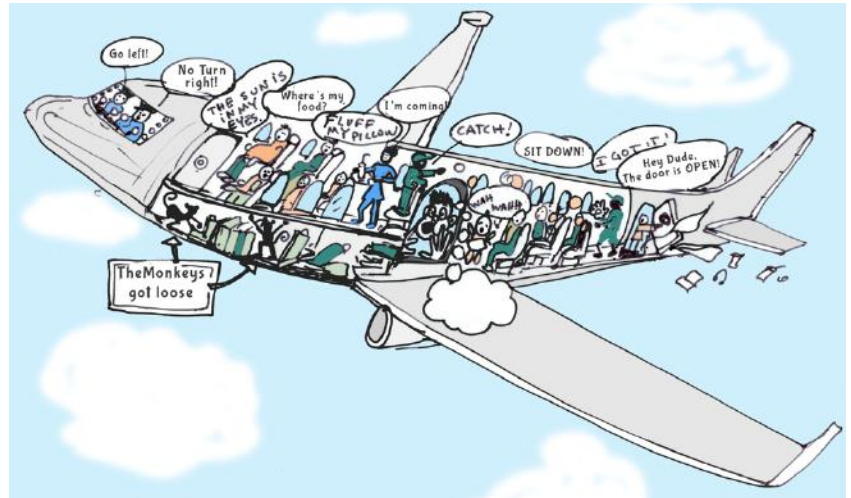
3rd Sundays, prayer chain, daily update

2nd & 4th Thursday morning, 6:30-7am: tiny.cc/cmcpayer

<https://www.crosswaymchurch.org/prayer/>

Give thanks in all circumstances...in Christ

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28



God is using every part of life... to achieve His good purposes in us

To give us a foretaste of the new creation

To bring us home to joy with Him forever

To grow us in the character and qualities of Jesus

Joy, fellowship with God, and thanksgiving are “the spring from which all obedience flows”

“And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

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 12:1b-2

Reflection Questions for later today or this week...

1. Do a self-assessment: on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being never, and 10 being always):
 - a. How much of the time are you rejoicing in Christ?
 - b. How much of the time are you praying in Christ (a continual dependence upon God with constantly recurring prayer)?
 - c. How much of the time are you giving thanks in Christ?
2. Which of these three is your relative strength? Which of these three is your relative weakness?
 - a. Why might that be?
3. How could you use your relative strength to help in your relative weakness(es)?
4. **Rejoice always...in Christ**
 - a. What does it look like to obey this command?
 - b. Read 1 Peter 1:3-5 and 13. What is the grace that Jesus will bring to us when He returns? What is a healthy way to set our hope on that grace? How can that lead to joy in every circumstance?
5. **Pray continually...in Christ**
 - a. What does it look like to obey this command? (Consider this description: Constantly recurring prayer, growing out of continual dependence upon God)
 - b. In what way should prayer be joyful and full of thanksgiving? What adjustments might be needed in your prayer life? What might be a first step in those adjustments?
 - c. How can we help each other pray in this way?
Consider our opportunities together as a church, especially our 2nd and 4th Thursday morning prayer.
See <https://crosswaymchurch.org/prayer>
6. **Give thanks in all circumstances...in Christ**
 - a. What does it look like to obey this command? Especially consider when we are in hard times.
 - b. Consider Romans 8:28-30 and this description: “God is using every part of life to achieve His good purposes in us: to give us a foretaste of the new creation, to bring us home to joy with Him forever, and to grow us in the character and qualities of Jesus
7. Consider this statement: “Joy, fellowship with God, and thanksgiving are “the spring from which all obedience flows”
 - a. What does it mean? In what ways is it true?
8. What steps will you take this week to rejoice always, pray continually, and to give thanks in all circumstances in Christ Jesus? How can you partner with others to spur each other on in these things?

Conversation starters this week

How much of the time are you rejoicing?

How much of the time are you praying?

How much of the time are you giving thanks?

Would you like that to be different?