

Why joy?



You are encouraged to listen to the sermon or Podcast summary.

<https://crosswaymchurch.org/radiant> or use the QR code

Read together 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

- What naturally brings you joy? What takes away your joy?
- What is your reaction to the command to rejoice?
- What is important about joy, prayer, and thanksgiving being God's will for us "in Christ Jesus"?

Consider the 4 periods of human history and the 3 great works of God (underlined)

Creation

A perfectly good, life-giving world

Fall

Adam and Eve choosing to go against God's instructions for how to live will in this perfectly good world

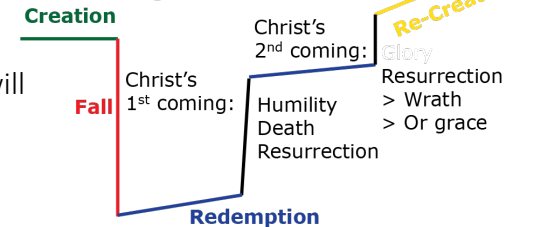
Redemption

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

Re-creation

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

4 periods of human history and the 3 great works of God



"in Christ Jesus" = living with bold hope in Re-Creation and Jesus' 2nd coming

The Big Idea

In Jesus Christ all of life is a journey home to glory with God forever

Reflection Questions for your group

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 (which might mean: a continual dependence upon God with constantly recurring prayer)?
 - c. How much of the time are you giving thanks in Christ?
2. When we think about our group, to what degree are we characterized by joy, prayer, and thanksgiving?
3. **Rejoice always...in Christ**
 - a. What does it look like to obey this command? Consider both those times when our circumstances naturally bring about joy as well as those times when joy seems impossible or even bad? In what sense might we be able to grieve and have joy at the same time (for example, see 2 Corinthians 6:10 where Paul says he is sorrowful yet always rejoicing).
 - 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?
 - c. What is a good way to help each other rejoice in Christ? What might be some problematic ways to encourage each other to rejoice? How can we guard against those problematic ways?
4. **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? How can we do that specifically in our group?

5. 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"
 - c. What practices can we adopt as a group to live this out?
6. Take time now to rejoice, to pray, and to give thanks.
7. What is a next step for our group?