

Sermon Title: A Holy Joy: Yet I Will Rejoice

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18

Big Idea:

Our joy is not rooted in changing circumstances; it is rooted in the presence of God.

Introduction — When We Don't Feel Joy

- **Charlie Brown said:** “Christmas is coming, but I'm not happy.”
 - Sometimes everything around us says we *should* be happy, but we aren't.
 - We can fall into the “**when...then**” mentality:
 - When I get the job... then.
 - When I get married... then.
 - When I get out of debt... then.
 - When this problem is solved... then.
 - **Dodge Colt illustration:** The same car that once represented freedom became a liability when circumstances changed.
 - **Key thought:** We often look to circumstances to give us something they were never designed to give us.
 - **Big Idea:** Our joy is not rooted in changing circumstances; it is rooted in the unchanging presence of God.
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1. Rejoice Always — Because God Is With You

1 Thessalonians 5:16

- Paul says, “**Rejoice always.**”
- This doesn't mean pretending everything is wonderful.
- We can grieve, hurt, struggle, and still have joy.
- **Habakkuk 3:17–18:** Everything fails—yet Habakkuk says, “**Yet I will rejoice.**”
- Habakkuk has no “then.” **He has God.**
- **Psalms 23:4:** “For you are with me.”

- God doesn't promise deliverance from every valley; **He promises His presence in the valley.**
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2. Our Joy Is Found in God's Presence

- The story of Scripture is the story of **God with us**:
 - God with Adam and Eve.
 - God dwelling among Israel.
 - The tabernacle and temple.
 - Jesus—**Emmanuel, God with us.**
 - Jesus: “I am with you always.”
 - The Holy Spirit dwelling within us.
 - Revelation: God dwelling with His people forever.
 - **Psalm 16:11**: “You will fill me with joy in your presence.”
 - **John 15:11**: “That my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.”
 - Paul in Philippians 3:
 - The world says, “**When I have everything, then I'll have joy.**”
 - Paul says, “**I lost everything... but I have Christ.**”
 - **In Christ, I have fullness of joy.**
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3. Pray Continually — Because God Is Close

1 Thessalonians 5:17

- We don't pray because God is far away.
- **We pray because God is near.**
- **Brother Lawrence**: practiced the presence of God in the monastery kitchen.
- His insight:

“The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer...”

- The kitchen was still noisy.
 - The dishes still had to be washed.
 - **But God was there.**
 - Prayer means learning to recognize God's presence in ordinary life.
 - “God, You are here.”
 - **We don't always pray to change the circumstances; sometimes we pray to remember that we are not alone in them.**
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4. Give Thanks in All Circumstances

1 Thessalonians 5:18

- Paul says “**in**” all circumstances, not necessarily “**for**” all circumstances.
 - We don't have to call bad things good.
 - We can say:
 - “God, this hurts.”
 - “I don't understand.”
 - **“But thank You that You are here.”**
 - Thanksgiving becomes an expression of trust.
 - Like Habakkuk:
 - The circumstances may be terrible.
 - **God is still there.**
 - **Yet I will rejoice.**
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5. This Is God's Will for You

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Paul gives us something remarkably clear:

God's will is:

1. **Rejoice always.**
 2. **Pray continually.**
 3. **Give thanks in all circumstances.**
 - Not because life will always be good.
 - But because **Christ is always with us.**
 - John 15:11 — “My joy may be in you.”
 - **We don't manufacture joy. We receive it.**
 - We remain in Christ, and His joy becomes our joy.
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Conclusion — Don't Wait for “Then”

Charlie Brown said:

“Christmas is coming, but I'm not happy.”

Then return to the **“when...then”** mentality.

- When I get the job... then.
- When my circumstances change... then.
- When God answers my prayer... then.

But what if joy isn't waiting on the other side of **then**?

What if joy is available right now?

Habakkuk:

“Yet I will rejoice.”

David:

“For you are with me.”

Paul:

“Rejoice always.”

Jesus:

“That my joy may be in you.”

Psalm 16:

“You will fill me with joy in your presence.”

Final Thought

Circumstances change.

God's presence does not.

We may not know what tomorrow holds.

But we know **who will be there tomorrow.**

We may walk through the valley.

But **He will be there.**

We may not have everything we want.

But **in Christ, we have fullness of joy.**

Final Challenge

Don't wait for “then.”

Rejoice now.

Pray now.

Give thanks now.

Because **the presence of the Lord is where our joy is found.**

Apply the Word:

Are you relying on things and circumstances and things to make you happy?

Are we waiting for joy around the corner or do we recognize that there is joy in the midst of the valley?

Do we understand that our joy comes from God's presence in the valley and not necessarily deliverance.

Do we pray because God is near?

Do we live a life of Thanksgiving?