

A person is silhouetted against a bright sunset, standing on the edge of a large, layered rock formation. Their arms are raised in a gesture of triumph or joy. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow that fills the sky and the landscape below. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of achievement and happiness.

Pay Attention To Your Joy
Mark 2:18-22

Are you in spiritual danger? If you were, how would you know?

- Jim Johnson, “One key sign of spiritual danger is losing your joy. Don’t skim past what Paul says at the end of Philippians 3:1: “Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you is no trouble to me and is safe for you.” Paul reminds them to rejoice because it is safe.”

Biblical Definition of Joy

We need to settle on a common definition of Biblical joy this morning

- Biblical joy is *“Contentedness with and in Jesus Christ”*
 - Contented = feeling or showing satisfaction with one's possessions, status, or situation

Biblical Definition of Joy - Contentedness with and in Jesus Christ

Biblical joy is joy that is settled upon the person and work Jesus Christ in your life

- Satisfaction with our place, purpose, circumstances because we are alive in Christ Jesus
- **John 5:26 NLT** 26 The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son.

Biblical Definition of Joy - Contentedness with and in Jesus Christ

Life-giving power is

- Life that comes from and flows from the Father to His Son, to us
 - Not just existence without purpose and meaning
 - **John 10:10 NIV** The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Biblical Definition of Joy - Contentedness with and in Jesus Christ

Life-giving power is

- An assurance that God has us in the palm of His hand, under His wing, close to His heart
- **John 10:28 NLT** I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand.

Biblical Definition of Joy - Contentedness with and in Jesus Christ

Life-giving power is

- **Psalms 91:4 NLT** He will cover you with his feathers. He will shelter you with his wings. His faithful promises are your armor and protection.

Biblical Definition of Joy - Contentedness with and in Jesus Christ

Life-giving power is

- **Isaiah 40:10 NLT** He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will carry the lambs in his arms, holding them close to his heart. He will gently lead the mother sheep with their young.

Biblical Definition of Joy - Contentedness with and in Jesus Christ

Biblical joy comes from the Lord Jesus Christ

- **John 15:10-11 NLT** 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

Paul defined joy this way

- **Philippians 4:11b-13 NLT** for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. 12 I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. 13 For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.
 - It is the absence of fear

Are you in spiritual danger this morning?

- Joy is one of the vital gauges on the dashboard of the Christian life.
 - When the needle dips — when you lose your joy — you should take note. To stay safe, you need to pay attention to your joy.

As a spiritual barometer, joy is not a slave to circumstances

- The light of Jesus' face shines in the darkest night
 - **Matthew 4:16 NIV** the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.
 - Jesus said, "No one will take your joy from you" (**John 16:22**).

As a spiritual barometer, joy is not a slave to circumstances

- We have some spiritual joy killers in our scriptures this morning as they attempt to manipulate Jesus
- **Mark 2:18-22**

How does Christ-gazing, Spirit-given joy keep us safe?

- First, joy keeps you safe as you serve
 - If you lose your joy, that could be a sign that your work for the Lord is no longer worship. Joy protects you from serving God for the wrong reasons.
- Second, joy keeps you safe from temptation
 - Joy protects you because joy in Christ comes from being satisfied in Christ.

How does Christ-gazing, Spirit-given joy keep us safe?

- Matthew Henry said, “Joy in the Lord will guard you from the empty pleasures the tempter uses to bait his hooks.”
- Last week they questioned Jesus’ company
- This week they question why he is having such a good time

The question about fasting

- Biblical fasting is a vehicle for reflecting and repenting for your sins
- There was only one fast commanded by the Law on the Day of Atonement

The question about fasting

- To the Pharisees If one day a year is good, then twice a week must be perfect
- Tuesday and Thursdays were fast days
- 12-hour fast, we would call that missing breakfast and lunch

The question about fasting

There was only one fast commanded by the Law on the Day of Atonement

- They made sure everyone knew they were fasting and religious
- Put on sackcloth, smear ash on face and clothes, walk around with a sorrow face, stand on street and moan in prayer

The question about fasting

There was only one fast commanded by the Law on the Day of Atonement

- **Matthew 6:5 NLT** “When you pray (**fast**), don’t be like the hypocrites who love to pray (**fast**) publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get.

The question about fasting

The vast majority of people could never do the two a week, it was a religious hardship and burden not commanded by God

- **Matthew 23:4b NLT** They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden.
- I wonder how much of our joy killing today is from things not command by God

The question about fasting

Hear the question given to Jesus, “Why are you not commanding your disciples to fast? That’s what you are supposed to do. It is tradition.”

- Simply saying, “Jesus get in line, get back in the box we have put you in. Be sorrowful like a good religious boy.” – Validate our traditions
- Look at Jesus’ responses

I came to convert sinners, not compliment the self-righteous

Here we have some sincere, well-meaning disciples of John the Baptist

- Confused as to why Jesus was not fasting and demanding his disciple to fast like John did
- Jesus, you should be more like John

I came to convert sinners, not compliment the self-righteous

Sometimes totally sincere believers will try and put you into their fenced in field of religious belief

- To be a good and religious person you must look, see, believe, do and smell just like them

I came to convert sinners, not compliment the self-righteous

John's disciples missed the change of message

- John the Baptist, "Repent for the Kingdom of God is at hand."
- They were sincerely fasting to ask God to bring the Kingdom of God on earth – They were sincere
- The Kingdom of God is now there because Jesus is the Kingdom of God

I came to convert sinners, not compliment the self-righteous

The Pharisees were saying, “You should be more like us.”, that’s a different message than John’s disciples

- **Mark 2:17b NLT** When Jesus heard this, he told them, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

I came to convert sinners, not compliment the self-righteous

Jesus told both groups no, that's a wonderful word God has given us

- What would have been their next question?
 - Why?
 - Jesus is never threatened by an honest "Why" question

I did not come to reform the old but introduce a new

vs. 21-22 NLT 21 “Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before. 22 “And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the wine would burst the wineskins, and the wine and the skins would both be lost. New wine calls for new wineskins.”

I did not come to reform the old but introduce a new

Hear Jesus say, “I didn’t come to patch up the Law or infuse it with new and greater power. I came to bring something brand new.”

I did not come to reform the old but introduce a new

They wanted Jesus to compromise His teaching with theirs

- A lot of what Jesus said they liked and agreed with
- They would have been happy to take some of Jesus' teaching and blend it with their tradition and presto, it would please everyone

I did not come to reform the old but introduce a new

This is exactly what the Church in America is doing today

- To make it so everyone is comfortable with Jesus, let's add some of the new ideas from other teachers/religions
- Confronting sin will never be comfortable
- Without the confronting of sin there will never be salvation

I did not come to reform the old but introduce a new

Jesus came to bring newness in our lives

- **Ezekiel 36:26 NLT** 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

I did not come to reform the old but introduce a new

Jesus came to bring newness in our lives

- **Luke 4:18-19 NLT** 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, 19 and that the time of the Lord’s favor has come.”

I did not come to reform the old but introduce a new

- Finding favor means gaining approval, acceptance, or special benefits or blessings
- The Lord's year of favor referred to a traditional year in Israeli society where the poor's debts to the wealthy were wiped away
 - Land sold was to be returned to the original owner
 - There would be a reset, This is what salvation is

When you are married to Christ, life should be like a wedding feast not a funeral

Jesus compared his disciples to guests of the bridegroom at the wedding feast

- Jewish wedding feasts were 7 days long
- There was to be no work, no religious regulations, just a great celebration

When you are married to Christ, life should be like a wedding feast not a funeral

- It was such a joyous time for Jewish families despite the difficulties that might be in their lives
- Hear Jesus say, “Are not wedding guests supposed to have a good time?”

When you are married to Christ, life should be like a wedding feast not a funeral

- Marriage was one of the illustrations God used in the Old Testament to represent His relationship to Israel
 - **Isaiah 54:5 NLT** For your Creator will be your husband; the Lord of Heaven's Armies is his name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth.

When you are married to Christ, life should be like a wedding feast not a funeral

- The major theme in Hosea is God's love for his adulterous wife and His desire to restore her to his favor one again
 - “Then the LORD said to me, ‘Go again, love a woman who is loved by her husband, yet an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the sons of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.’” (**Hosea 3:1**)

When you are married to Christ life, should be like a wedding feast not a funeral

John the Baptist has already introduced Jesus as the Bridegroom,

- **John 3:27-30 NLT** 27 John replied, “No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven.
28 You yourselves know how plainly I told you, ‘I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.’

When you are married to Christ life, should be like a wedding feast not a funeral

- **John 3:27-29 NLT** 29 It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success.
 - Our Lives are to reflect the joy of the Lord, God has favored us with

Two people are not married just because they know each other or even have strong feelings toward one another

- There must be a commitment to each other and making that commitment known usually by saying, “I do”
- They must separate themselves from all others and cleave to the one they are marrying

Salvation from sin involves much more than a person knowing about Christ or even having good feelings toward Him

- Salvation comes when a sinner commits themselves to Jesus Christ and says, “I do”
- Then the believer immediately enters into the joys of this spiritual marriage relationship with Christ

Salvation from sin involves much more than a person knowing about Christ or even having good feelings toward Him

- We bearing His name
- We sharing His wealth and power
- We enjoying His love and protection
- And one day we will live eternally in His glorious home he is preparing for us right now

Salvation from sin involves much more than a person knowing about Christ or even having good feelings toward Him

- During our life on earth, God is showering us with himself
 - Asking us to respond to Him, not the events of life but to Him personally

Salvation from sin involves much more than a person knowing about Christ or even having good feelings toward Him

Then we can respond to whatever life throws at us like Nehemiah

- **Nehemiah 8:10b NLT** Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!"

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