

## Sermon- Joyful, Holy and Hated

Scripture: John 17:13-19

Sunday, September 27, 2020

Earlier in Jesus' prayer He talked about how disciples are those people who believe, accept and live out or keep God's word. As they do that they are going to face opposition in the form of sowing disunity in their midst. Of course Jesus prays for protection from disunity for us in the power of His father's name. In the next part of his prayer, he presents three more characteristics of being a disciple. Being joyful, being holy and being hated by the world.

Today we are going to dive into all three and we are going to start with joy. This is what Jesus tells his heavenly father. "I told them many things while I was with them so that they might be filled with joy". So what are the many things that Jesus told his disciples about joy? Well there are 8 times Jesus has mentioned joy before this point just in John. Five of those references are just in the previous chapter so we have a pretty good idea of what Jesus is referring to. So we will look at those references, but as we do bear in mind the timeline of the events of Jesus life. Right now, Jesus is about ready to enter the events of the Passion week. Literally the next chapter will be Jesus' betrayal and arrest. And while the disciples will not know what hit them in spite of all the preparation, remember that Jesus knows exactly what's coming. It is like worst of both worlds for Jesus. In his divinity, he knows what is coming, but he is going to have to live through in his humanity. That is unimaginable to us because we will in the dimensions of human existence. Jesus lives in human and divine dimensions. But an analogy for us would be like this. Just think about something terrible that happened to you in the past. Now imagine if your whole life you knew that that terrible thing was going to happen. That would be a pretty unbearable life to live, wouldn't it? And yet in spite of knowing what was going to happen to him on the cross, Jesus dares to speak about joy. Why is that?

Because Jesus knows something that the people who would inflict the violence on Him don't know. And that is that they making Jesus an example so that others will not follow him. Jesus knows that people will follow him starting from the third day. They think that they are demonstrating the power of the Roman empire. Jesus knows that by the fourth century the Roman emperor would be worshiping Him. The Romans and the Jews thought that eliminating Jesus would ensure that nothing would change in their world. Jesus knew that His death would change everything in their world, including the power of sin and death itself.

In other words, Jesus can have joy even when he looks forward into the crucifixion because he also has the capacity to look even more into the future and see the transformation that is to come according to all that His heavenly father has planned. So Jesus is joyful. It is like you have cancer and you have to undergo a very painful surgery. But what if you knew that this surgery would be 100% successful and would get rid of the cancer once and for all? Would you not have a feeling of joy even as you face some really big pain? Jesus has a better illustration. He talks about it like the pain of childbirth. It is a terrible pain no doubt but the mother knows that this pain has a purpose. The purpose is to produce a beautiful baby. This purpose is so great that the pain alone the way becomes a by-the-way. Jesus' joy comes from keeping his eyes on the purpose and not the pain. This is the joy that Jesus has.

Now you and I don't have that kind of knowledge about the future. You and I don't live with such perfect knowledge about the significance or the impact of our work. But here is the amazing thing. Jesus is promising us His disciples, that in him, we can have His joy. Isn't that huge? Jesus is always giving us what belongs to him and this time he is saying, here you can have the same kind of joy that I have. In John 15:9-11 he says, ***“As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's***

***commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete”.***

Jesus is promising us his joy. But this promise comes with a condition. The condition is that we abide in Jesus love. That means living in obedience to Jesus taking Jesus' example of how he lives in obedience to His father in Heaven. Abiding in Jesus' love means, obeying Jesus out of our love for Him. When we do that Jesus promises us His kind of joy. It is a joy that nobody can mess with because it comes from the Father, Son and Holy Spirit itself and no power in the universe can mess with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we obey Christ because we love Him that much, Jesus promises us that we get to have Jesus's own un-mess-able joy.

Now you know Jesus. He wants to give us even more than that. He also wants to give us His Holiness as well. Let's understand holiness for a second. Holiness literally means being set apart for God's purposes. This church building is holy because it is set apart for God's purposes and nothing else. This park is holy because it is set apart for God's purposes. You and me, as Christ followers are holy because we are set part for God's purposes. But that's where it gets tricky. You see if a person is set apart for God's purposes, God has to so the setting apart. That is where Jesus' prayer comes in. He is asking God to set His followers apart. But this setting apart happens with one crucial step. It happens when God's truth becomes the foundation of our lives. It is a life long process no doubt. Nobody goes for saying, Jesus you are the Lord of my life to being a 100% transformed individual. In response to Jesus' prayer, the Father sets the Christ follower apart and plants the truth of God's word in their life. But what happens next is up to us. If we love Christ, we have to keep obeying his commandments. And we will only know His commandments if we immerse ourselves in scripture on a daily basis.

But Jesus knows another thing about this process. Before you or I could be set apart for anything by God, God had to do something. He died for our sins. In verse 19 Jesus tells his father in anticipation and purpose, “I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth”.

This is why we love God so much. Because Jesus gave Himself as a Holy sacrifice for our sins. And because He did, we love him and abide in his love. That means we obey Him out of our love for Him. Not because we understand everything in Jesus plan. That is what makes us set apart people. You see people in general want to be told do this because of x,y or z reason. This is perfectly understandable if you are dealing with something very simple. But often you are dealing with things beyond our understanding and then we just have to obey. For example when you are in a plane they tell you to put your electronic devices off. Now the reason they give is because it can interfere with the planes electronics. But they only tell you to put your devices off during take off and landing right? Why is that? Is the plane not using electronics when it is cruising? And how does your computer interfere with the planes electronics anyway? How many passengers actually understand it? And yet you obey don't you? Now we obey these earthly people and I say we absolutely should. But then how much more should we obey God even when we don't fully understand the reason for His commandments because God is driving not just a complex aircraft but God is driving the whole uber complex universe of which we don't even understand 1% off. We are to obey God not because we understand everything. We obey God because we love and trust God. And we do, we are living as set apart beings.

I want to remind you though that as we obey God out of our love for him, we are going to face a pull on your life. A pull to do things like the rest of the world is doing or as your flesh wants to do or even as Satan may tempt you to do in specific instances. These are strong forces like gravity. These forces are constant, they are everywhere and in spite of

being constant and everywhere it can even take you by surprise. Isn't that something? :) Being set apart means to be always working against gravity. Now you are thinking, how can I work against gravity all the time? Well just hold that thought because I think Jesus Christ is revealing how this works in the John 15:9-12 section. He is saying, you obey him because you love Him right? You see as Jesus is watching over us from above. Now we are drawn to him from the earth. When we love Jesus there is an attraction force that pulls us upward that is greater than the force of gravity that pulls us downward. That is other way of saying when we love God more than we love the world we will be able to live according to the rules of God and in that process it is like overcoming the force of gravity of the pulls and temptations of this world in our lives. That is what it means to be holy and set apart for Jesus.

But in Jesus prayer. He also says that besides being joyful and Holy, his people are also going to be hated by the world. Think of it like a crocodile trying to devour a bird. As it approached the bird, it flaps its wings and takes to the air, overcoming gravity and the crocodile. Now imagine how made the crocodile might get at seeing this bird escape. That is how made the world gets at us when we escape its snapping jaws. What that means in practical terms is that when you are a Christ follower, you might do things differently. You might dress differently, or decide not to sleep around like the world does or live your gender roles as God tells you too and not according to what the world is saying or even honoring God and talk about Jesus in an appropriate way. Now the people of this world will look at that and think that you are acting "holier than them" or perceive that because you are acting differently, that you are acting disrespectfully towards them. This then gets them upset and they begin to hate you. But when this happens don't take it personally. Because they are not hating you, they are expressing their hatred towards Jesus Christ who is the one that gave you the wings to escape the pull of gravity in the first place. Remember they hate us because they hate Christ. Jesus said in John 15:18, ***"if the world hates you, understand that it hated me first"***. This is

the difficult part of being a Christ follower. We inherit not only his joy and holiness, we also inherit the hatred that the world has for Him. Now when the world hates you, it is very tempting to hate them back. But Christ did not return hate with hate but continued to love and pray for those to persecuted him. If we have Christ's joy and Christ's holiness in us, we have to have Christ's way of handling the incoming hate as well. This may be the most difficult part of walking with Christ. But is Christ has called his to this life and blessed us with his joy and his holiness, then he will also bless us with his capacity to return love for the hatred.

May each of us be so drawn to the pull of Christ's love and so filled with every good gift from heaven that we may be able to grow into the fullness of Christ in us and we able to radiate it into the world just like Christ did. Let us pray.