

Unfailing Joy

Opening Text: John 16:22-27,33

Jesus knew the potential of hardship and tribulations to shake the faith of His disciples.

16:1 - *"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble.*

Not wanting His disciples to stumble and fail, He gave them two very powerful promises, that are ours too.

²² *Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.*

- a) **A promise of return.** He said, *I will see you again.* Jesus was going to come back – physically. He was going to present Himself alive, physically, by many infallible proofs (Acts 1:3).
- b) **A promise of joy** – *"and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you"* - Jesus was going to give them unfailing joy

The very first word Jesus spoke to His disciples after He was raised from the dead was *Rejoice!* (Matthew 28:9)

When the "here and now" looks discouraging let us hold on to these two promises:

- One is a **promise for the future:** Jesus is coming back!
- The other a **promise for our present:** joy is ours, now! Sorrow is not our portion, but joy is! Joy is mentioned 6 times in this chapter alone.

Unfailing joy!

V.22 ... I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.

No one will take it from you! – This is an unfailing joy; it is a joy that can't be stolen. It is a joy that stays. It is not a fluctuating emotion but a constant reality. This joy is a steady flowing river!

Psalms 46:4-5 - *There is a river whose streams shall make **glad** the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the Most High. ⁵ God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn.*

This river of joy never runs dry. It is permanent. It is not a seasonal river; it is not a tidal river either. No. It is always available, always dependable, always certain, always sure, and always running full!

Jesus prayed to the Father for us in **chapter 17:13**: - *"that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves"*

This **river of joy** announced by Jesus and prayed for by Him is not seasonal, it is not tidal, it is constant because it is fed by **3 unfailing fountains**:

1. **An unfailing Jesus**

Jesus is unfailing. He said, *be of good cheer, I have overcome the world*. The world, the cross, the grave and even the descent to the lowest parts of the earth weren't enough to cause Jesus to fail.

Isaiah 42:4 says that "*He will not fail*". Jesus doesn't fail so we can have joy and an expectation of good.

He said, *I will see you again and your heart will rejoice!* And they saw Him again – intact and victorious. They saw Him and they touched Him physically. That's how real He is!

Luke 24:39 - *Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I, Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.*"

He presented Himself real, visible and tangible. One day He will come back in the same way! The Bible says, that every eye will see Him. This is what feeds the river of joy in us.

2. **The unfailing love of our Father**

²³ *"And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. ²⁴ Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, **that your joy may be full.***

a) The river of this joy runs full - like a river during monsoon season

Psalms 16:11 speaks of "fullness of Joy":

b) I believe that many come short of experiencing this fullness because of their disconnect with the heavenly Father.

Jeremiah 2:13 - *"For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

We can't come up with this joy on our own, independent from the Father. Fullness of joy only comes from spending time in the presence of God according to Psalms 16:11.

c) Verses 26-27: *In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you; ²⁷ for the Father Himself loves you,...*

Jesus points the disciples in the direction of a sure Fountain, one that will not fail them because His love is also unfailing. *The Father Himself loves you!*

This joy comes from the Father Himself and from all the answers to prayer we will get along the way! – *ask and you will receive that your joy may be full!*

These two fountains keep the river of joy running full: an unfailing Jesus and the unfailing love of the Father. The third sure way to stay full of joy is...

3. **When we don't fail to love God**

V.27a - *²⁷for the Father Himself loves you, because **you have loved Me***"

The gospel of John ends with a conversation between Jesus and Peter. 3 times Jesus asks Peter, "**do you love Me?**"

The disciples loved the Lord. To love the Lord is such a vital key to experience His unfailing river of joy. Many of us need to learn what it is to delight ourselves in the Lord, to centre our affection on Him.

Psalm 91:14 – *Because he has **set his love upon Me**, therefore I will deliver him*

No one who loved the Lord ever came short of His favour, blessings and joy. Our relationship with God can't just be 'contractual'. That is not how it works, that is not how authentic faith works.

Galatians 5:6 - *For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love.*

What avails, what works, is a faith that is based on our love for God.

A sure way to stay full of joy is to stay in love with God.

John 15:9-11 - *⁹“As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹“These things I have spoken to you, **that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.***

Conclusion

At a challenging time for the disciples, when they were vulnerable, when they could be made to stumble and fall, Jesus gave them the promise of his return and the promise of joy. The promise of joy is for us also.

We are not doing our Christian life properly

- if this river of joy is not flooding our lives constantly
- if we are not seeing answers to prayers
- if areas in our lives remain untouched and unchanged

As we saw today there are 3 sure fountains that feed the river of God's joy in your life. You should be experiencing ample supply; you should never experience drought or a diminished flow of this joy. It should be a constant reality in our lives.

I know that the days are tough. We are living at the end of time. The Bible says that the love of many will grow cold. However, remember our unfailing Jesus to love Him and seek Him more and more.

He has an appointment with us at the end of time. We will see Him – every eye will see Him. He will not fail us, He will not leave us behind, He will come for us!