

Rev. Bill Reeves

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Experiencing the Balance of Joy Now and in Heaven

I am recording today's sermon using my iPhone, which I will have a transcript of on our website. I have developed transcripts for six sermons that the Pastor has given. I'm particularly proud of the last one I did because I went in and kind of gave the outline. As you read it, you see it in smaller sections. I've got a copy of it for Pastor to look at.

I use my software to edit my work, which needs a lot of editing. But when I edit his work, I hesitate to change words because he chooses a certain word. And in my software, it says, "Well, you could use this word or use a synonym. As a writer, when you write things and choose different words, sometimes that's more interesting. But, you know, how do you mess with the Apostle Paul? I went with Pastor's words as much as possible because he chose those words. The words are part of the biblical argument, so I kept them in the text. It's one of the editing choices you can make. So I'm hoping you get there and read these things that he has done. This work of his came in 2014. He was a young kid then. And you'll enjoy it. I learn more when I read than when I hear. I can tell you the science behind it, but it is true.

Enjoy the Here and Now

Our thoughts of spirituality, having the fruit of the Spirit love, and then the rest of them. Well, we're going to look today at joy. And Paul says this. You like to turn to 1 Timothy 4.4. Paul, "*Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it's received with thanksgiving.*" Joy, there's an excellent balance in joy that I like to share today. Of course, we know that there are joys in heaven. We're all looking forward to heaven, a wonderful place filled with glory and grace. You see, we're looking forward to it. But there's also the balance of how God works in our lives, where there's joy in our lives. Paul gives us a principle: "*Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it's received with thanksgiving.*" So, expand the concept of joy as you reflect back on what has given you joy. You know, as you filled the seats and you came to church, I had joy. It was good to see you. But we have that.

Dorothy Sayers argued about this. "The characteristic common to God and man apparently is the desire and the ability to make things. And in the book of Psalms tells us, "Establish the works of our hands." There are things we do that align with long-term goals that we're working on at work or in life. But as we do them, there's a joy in it. And there is a joy in God blessing the things that we do.

There's a joy in singing. The greatest thing that attracts people to music is their joy in singing what they're singing. You know, and we can be singing our hymns and our songs, and if we have the joy of the Lord in doing it, it's a joyful sound. It's a joyful sound. And that's what's needed in the church today: a joyful

Ps. 90:17 And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands.

sound that's just singing praise to the Lord and learning from their singing. So we're going to look at the balance.

The Joy of the Lord is our Strength

In the book of Nehemiah, chapter 8, verse 1, "Now all the people gathered together, one man in an open square in front of the water gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. And Ezra, the priest, brought the law before the assembly of the men and women and all that could hear with understanding on the first day to the seventh month. Then he read it in the open square that was in front of the water gate from morning to midday."

So you all got here about 8 o'clock, and somewhere in midday, we finished with the readings of, we'll cut it short, from Exodus to Deuteronomy. And we just read it through. And everybody was just glad that we were doing it. Well, I don't wonder if I've ever been anywhere other than Israel where they do this kind of thing once a year. But to sit and listen to the scriptures being read book after book, I think we'd find that challenging, you know, especially as we went through numbers, you know because numbers are between Exodus and Deuteronomy, and you got to get through at least nine chapters of begat, begat, begat. And I know you all would be listening and paying great attention to that.

By the way, when they were reading the law of Moses, they were standing up.

But here they were reading it from morning to midday before the men and women and those who could understand in the ears of the people paid attention to the book of the law. Ezra 8:4 "So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiyah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam." Can you say those names backward? It may be hard because, forward, it was hard enough. But I want you to notice what these guys were doing. 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, or he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 8:6 and Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And then the people answered, Amen, Amen. And while lifting up their hands, they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord in the faces of the ground."

Now, here's a bunch of other people who were Levites. And notice what it says here in verses seven and eight. "They helped the people to understand the law, and the people stood in their place. So they read distinctly from the book in the law of God, and they gave the sense, and they helped them to understand the reading." So here, Ezra is the catalyst. He's reading the Word of God. Now, people in the crowd are explaining what he's reading. This reading Ezra is doing is a translation that's going on. The people at this time, they weren't speaking Hebrew. They at this time were using another language. Possible translating from Hebrew to Aramaic.¹ And they had to have this stuff translated for them so they could understand it.

¹ Walvoord, John F.; Zuck, Roy B.. The Bible Knowledge Commentary History (BK Commentary) (p. 818). David C Cook. Kindle Edition. Gene Getz

So, from morning to midday, there's a lot of teaching going on. But the bottom line is that you can see how the people understood what they were reading. People were there explaining it to them. They made sense of it, and they helped with the reading.

Now, Governor Nehemiah will get up and say something a politician would say. But I want you to note what he says here in verse 10. "Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those to whom nothing's prepared." Interestingly, the priests gave the people food after listening to the Word all morning. And that food is what they needed. And he says, "For this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow." There were things in the law that they were seeing that weren't part of their life. And they were regretting the sin they were reading about in their life. They had sorrow. He says, "Do not sorrow. For the joy of the Lord is your strength". What's your strength? His joy. God gives you joy, and that joy strengthens you.

We need His strength today. You need his strength. You need his joy.

I will use an example of a procedure that none of us like. It is a colonoscopy, and it's so invasive that it just takes up all our energy. There's no joy in it at all. It weakens us, but it gives the doctors a chance to look inside our body to see if there are polyps that are growing that they can take out before they turn into cancer. But it's no fun. No fun at all. And sometimes, we need the Lord to help us through things. And that's kind of what we're talking about today.

A few years ago, there was a TV program called Men of a Certain Age. In one episode, all three men decided to get a colonoscopy. Their idea was to drink the medicine to clean out the bowels, and they would make plans about what they were doing that weekend. They wanted to have a guy's weekend. After drinking the medicine, they went to the bar to gamble and socialize. Those who have had this procedure know this is a bad idea. The body will start to clean itself out, and we have no control over that. The humor is that this urge to go to the bathroom becomes so strong that they find themselves rushing back to the room where two of them share the same bathroom. Now I am having an uncontrollable laughter. I know what they are feeling. And the actors did a great job. Their plans turned into a catastrophe.

The medicine works, our digestive system is cleaned, and we go in for the procedure. The whole thing drains our energy, and we need a little time to recover. Please do not let me discourage you from this procedure. It is a good thing to do and could save your life.

Verse 11, "So the Levites quieted all the people saying, 'Be still, for the day is holy. Do not be grieved.' And all the people went their way and ate and drank. They sent their portions rejoiced greatly because they understood the words that were declared unto them."

Our Focus of Joy from the Lord Jesus

In our day, Jesus gave us a truth to capture this principle. He did so much in one day. That would take a long time for the disciples to unravel. But when he gave that upper room discourse, he talked about things in that discourse that they would have to spend time with. But one of the things that God does for us is the imparted joy Christ said, John 15:11, "That my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full." His

joy and our joy link together to give us a fullness of the experience of joy. Not just, you know, Pastor Rain's expense. I have used this illustration many times. He has said, you know, you can have this cup of coffee right here. And not only will the Lord fill it, but he will fill it to the brim where it's just about ready to spill over. And, of course, Pastor enjoys the smell of it, you know, and he's rejoicing in the Lord. No, he's not. I am always ready for an opportunity for him to drink a cup of Joe. He hates coffee. But what are friends for? He knows all about that.

My point is that when God gives us joy, he fills it to the brim. Oh, I can't wait for heaven when Pastor drinks this stuff.² Anyway, joy is just a wonderful thing.

Jesus said, "Abide in my love, keep my commandments, and you will abide in my love." Now, abiding is one of the keys to experiencing God's joy. "These things I have spoken to you, that you, that my joy may remain in you and your joy may be full." John 15:10. 11

1 John 1:4 echoes this refrain in the first chapter when he says, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." And that's a wonderful experience that we can have. The joy of the Lord.

Jim Smith and I³ used to sing this intense theological song. "Jesus' love is a-bubbling over; Jesus' love is in my soul." Really deep. Anyway, and then we did like this, "A bubble a-bubbling, a bubble a-bubbling." And he'd do another part, you know. Well, anyway. It always brought smiles to the kids, maybe because of our awful singing. I don't know. We had a lot of fun with them. And joy is something that God wants to give.

Peter says, "Whom you've not seen, you love; and whom you now not see him, but yet believe him, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full glory." 1 Pe. 1:8 The only divine joy is, you know, this is full. We've not seen Jesus. Yet, how many times do you have joy because of one that you never saw, and yet there you have it? It's there. Incredible. Incredible.

Balance of Joy on Earth and Heaven

Now, I want to balance this out. In a few minutes, we're going to balance it out. Finding joy in creation. Everything created by God is good. Nothing is to be rejected if it's received with thanksgiving. We're talking about every good gift that God gives. We're not talking about sin. But if we receive it with Thanksgiving, it's great. Some people might say, "Oh, I don't want that. I want to stay miserable." Okay. Go ahead. In finding joy in the eternal, sometimes we have to see things on earth, and then we see what it means in heaven.

There is more joy in heaven when somebody is lost and found. The angels rejoice. Luke chapter 15, To illustrate that, you have a few coins. It's everything that this person has to live on in the years that they have remaining, and they lost part of it.

² Dear reader, the private joke about coffee the congregation knows I poke fun about it. Do you know people that are only tea drinkers. They will not drink coffee. Now most coffee drinkers will also drink tea, but not always.

³ Jim Smith and I served many summers at Pine Ridge Camp. Jim has a great sense of humor and is very creative. We had a lot of fun. I think the kids did as well.

They know without what they lost, they would suffer. So she searches all over the house. I'm sure she's doing a senior thing. "Where did I put it? Where did I put it? Where did I put it? I just left a room. Where did I put it?" But then she finds it, and she goes and tells everybody, "Man, what I lost, I found." Now, we're starting to do that. But there's joy. There's absolute joy there.

Well, what about the sheep? There was a lost sheep. I think of Ira Sankey's "The Ninety and Nine." Ira was the song leader for DL Moody. He lived long enough for his voice to be recorded. What a wonderful song. He went to find the lost sheep, and there was great joy when he did. All right. Well, that tells us about heaven. What we lose here, and we have joy in finding. What about in heaven when somebody comes to know Christ as their Savior? There's great joy in heaven.

Link to 1898 recording

<https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermons/97081010204>

Finding joy in the family. "Even a child is known by their good works." Think about something a child does; it just makes you smile because they're doing the right thing. Sometimes, they do it without anybody knowing they're doing it, but that brings joy.

There's the joy of our salvation, discovering that God has claimed us. We have become clean; we have been redeemed; we have been saved. Jackie said this very well at the Thanksgiving service, during which we thanked God. She rejoiced so much because she belonged to God and was saved, and she was happy about that. Okay? That's about heaven, yet we connect our life with the eternal. Well, there's the joy of hobbies, the joy of work. Psalm 90:17 is the phrase that talks about the Lord blessing our work. "And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, And establish the work of our hands for us; Yes, establish the work of our hands."

There's joy in doing something. Somewhere below me, Jeff has done something with a sparrow. But thank God for the sparrow, and I know where you got the sparrow story from because He knows everything about that little sparrow. The sad thing about that is, of course, the hairs on our heads. Some of us have less, but God knows every one of our hairs.

The joy of discovering the Lord, "The Lord is my salvation. Whom shall I fear?" Psalm. 27:1

The joy of service. I can only tell you something that always brings me joy is when I help somebody who has a handicap. I was eight years old, and I went to a camp for the first time for people with cerebral palsy. When I went there, I discovered I was the strongest kid in the camp. You know? And they had me doing things for the other kids. And I was excited about that. And I also made a belt. I still remember the belt that I made. But I got a chance to help other kids, and at eight years old, I decided that's something I always wanted to do. I wanted to help those who are like me, but they might need my help.

So I was in a store with Barb a couple of years ago, about this time of year, and came across a mother and a child, and the child had cerebral palsy. And I said something to her like, "Hello, sister. You and I are brothers and sisters in the sense that we both have cerebral palsy. And I'm encouraged by how you work through your cerebral palsy." And I said it a lot better than that, but she smiled at me. The mother was wondering what planet I came from. But then the mother started asking me

questions, and I told her, "There is something that if you could help her to do, she'll have a much better life." Stretching for cerebral palsy is called pain relief. So, anytime you see somebody with cerebral palsy, you know that they are in pain. I'm telling you, they're in pain. But what helps them with the pain is stretching. And I said, "Make sure you help her do that." And she learns how to do that herself. I had a lot of fun with that little girl.

There's a joy in discovering the Lord is your strength. With our heads bowed, we all have gone through the experience, haven't we? "Lord, I need your help. I need your strength. I might even be out of strength. I need you." But as you go through that experience, He gives you the strength you need. Through the tough times, you've learned.

Now, in heaven, will you learn that? Are you going to learn that in heaven? No, because in heaven, there are no more hard times. You know, there's always a renewable strength happening all the time. Work is easy. Work is full of joy. But here on earth, we have to trust the Lord as we go through troubles and good times.

How about finding joy in fellowship? Well, you know there is. There's a joy in our long-term friendship here. But I'm telling you, there's a joy in making new friends. So wherever you are at today, look forward to making a new friend here and there. Include more people in your life that the Lord brings into your life. It's a good thing. Well, I think it's great to find other workers in the Lord helping with difficult ministries. "be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." You know, I think of the song "In Joy." There is strength.

Sometimes, I thought it was crazy. I was listening to these guys from World War I, and this was a tape thing back in the 50s, and all these guys were in the trenches. And they're talking about being in the trenches. They're talking about horrible conditions and unbelievable insanity, and they're laughing like crazy. You know, because they were all in the same club. And one of the ways that they remembered how they got through it was laughing together. You know, and they still did it. But you couldn't laugh with them if you weren't part of that club.

But I thought, wow, God has allowed people to do that. Heaven is the ultimate joy. I will show you. "You will show me the path of life, and in your presence is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore." Ps. 16:11 The disciples not only knew a man of sorrow, but they knew Jesus of joy. They knew when he smiled at them. He knew when he took pleasure in things. Bless the little children. Let them come to me. I mean, they brought Jesus joy. There's a balance. There are joys in heaven that will be wonderful, but we're living now and here and now, and there are joys that God wants us to discover and experience. He especially wants us to experience it now.

Now that we are weaker, we're older, and we have more problems, there are still things that God wants us to experience, and where we can see the joy of the Lord is our strength.⁴ We get that by being at home with God and abiding with him. I'm not going to say that you're not going to experience pain or other things that are so out of character of life, but I am saying that as long as he brings you through things, there's

⁴ My audience is mostly older people. When we are younger we have different experiences. Where you are now young or old think about how God gives you joy.

still going to be those times when you're going to look and see and have joy in your fellowship with God, despite whatever, and you fill in the blank. You're going to see it for yourself.

Now, I believe every one of you has experienced that. I do. Not that we don't have trouble from time to time. One time, I fell. I went from the top of a little hill to the bottom, and in between was nothing but air. And then I crash-landed, literally. And everything was hurting my body. There was no joy in Mudville that day. But God healed me. It took a while, but he healed me. And even at that point, and I have a witness in this one, but even at that point when I was so beaten up, I didn't want to curse God and die. I just wanted God to help me. He knew all about my pain, but I wanted to trust him. And I didn't have anything joyful to say at the moment. I didn't, But I had a resolve that the Lord helped me renew my strength. And he did.

And so joy is there. Joy is there. It's part of the fruit of the Spirit, Imparted by the Spirit. Yes, we have a natural joy that God gave to us, by the way. And we should rejoice in those things. But God has also given us the joy of the Holy Spirit. That comes by abiding with Jesus and trusting him. The balances work together. So that in our life, you know, joy. Yet greater joy in heaven. But I'm glad that I am walking with Jesus today.

Lord, thank you for this time in your Word. I wish I could say things better, but I pray, Lord, that you would help us think about times of joy in our lives, reflect on those things, and contemplate them. And then think about the Lord and our times with you. Where praying, reading the Word, where you communicate to us, where we sing to you, etc., etc. There's a joy that we can have this in the Lord. And it's in today. Could you help us to have both? In Jesus' name. Amen.

Have a great day, everybody.

Balance in Finding Joy

FINDING JOY IN THE HERE AND NOW

Finding Joy in Creation


“everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:4)

Finding Joy in Family
Prov. 20:11

Finding Joy In Friendship


Finding Joy in Work (Hobbies Included)
Ps. 90:17

FINDING JOY IN THE ETERNAL

 Discovering the Joy of the Angels & Heaven Luke 15:7, 10
From Earth to Heaven
Lost coin
Lost sheep
The angels know what heaven is like

 Discovering the Joy of Your Salvation

Discovering The Joy Of A Clean Life
Ps. 51:1, 2,9, 10
We will always be clean in heaven

 Discovering the Lord
Ps. 27:1

<p>Finding Joy in Service (Encouraging a little girl with CP)</p> <p>Finding Joy in Fellowship Long term friends New Friends</p> <p>Finding Joy With Walking With The Lord Hab. 3:18</p>	<p>🔑 Discovering the Lord is your strength Neh. 8:10 Through the tough times None in heaven</p> <p>🔑 Discovering the encouragement of other workers in difficult ministries Timothy, Titus, Paul</p> <p>🔑 Heaven is the ultimate Joy Ps. 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.</p>
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Contemplate: Think through what gives you joy. If it is not sin it probably one of things you could enjoy in the Lord. Yes we have trials and live in a fallen world, but God gives us good things to enjoy as we live in the land of the living. Now think about the joys of heaven. There is a balance to work out in our lives.