September 10, 2017

Series: It’s All Yours!

Growth Track Step 2 today …

Example of Generosity …

Prayer

**Sources of Joy**

John 16:16-33

**Intro:** Continuing to walk through the Gospel of John - uniquely different than the other 3 Gospels … Focuses on certain areas in particular -

One-third of his book focuses on the last week of Jesus’ life, and that’s the sections we are going to look at this fall.

Sometimes a big deal is made over someone’s “last words.”

* George Orwell’s last written words were, “At fifty, everyone has the face he deserves.” He died at age 46.
* Murderer James W. Rodgers was put in front of a firing squad in Utah and asked if he had a last request. He replied, “Bring me a bullet-proof vest.”
* Convicted murderer Thomas J. Grasso used his last words to complain about his last meal. He said, “I did not get my Spaghetti-O’s; I got spaghetti. I want the press to know this.”

God created us to be in a relationship with Him. That’s why we exist. That’s why we’re here. That’s why you are on this planet - to be in a life-giving relationship with God!

There is much God offers us. There is much He wants to give us - share with us - That’s why these messages are titled, “It’s All Yours!”

All this and more can be yours - AND the price is right - because these are free gifts from God!

The first gift we are told about is joy -

Why is it that having real joy in life sometimes seems so hard to find?

Life is hard. We go through all kinds of struggles and difficulties.

* Difficult relationships
* Sickness
* Death
* Unanswered prayers
* Job problems
* Money problems
* Confusion

It seems we have so much more of those things than we have joy.

But God has clearly said that He wants us to have joy - in this passage Jesus gives 4 sources of joy.

 **> Confidence for the future**

John 16:16-22 - “In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.”

 Some of the disciples asked each other, “What does he mean when he says, ‘In a little while you won’t see me, but then you will see me,’ and ‘I am going to the Father’? And what does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand.”

 Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, “Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won’t see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.”

Up until this time in the story, for the past three years there were a group of 12 men, plus several others, who had come to rely completely on Jesus. They followed Him everywhere He went. They did everything He said. They listened to every word He spoke - whether they understood it or not - often they didn’t -

But they had come to fully rely on this relationship - on this companionship -

Now - He is clearly telling them that a big change is coming - for a while, they are not going to see Him -

But - not to worry - after a while they will see Him again!

Again, the disciples struggled to figure out what He was talking about.

Jesus says they will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to Him - He’s obviously taking about His crucifixion …

While they weep the world will rejoice.

But - a big change will come - their weeping and mourning will be turned into joy - much like that of a woman who gives birth to a baby!

I don’t know anything about this ….

But Jesus said that when His followers would see Him again, they would experience a joy that no one could take away!

His disciples would see Him again after His resurrection …

We are going to see Him when He comes again!

John 14:1-3 - “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am.”

1st John 3:2 - Dear friends, we are already God’s children, but he has not yet shown us what we will be like when Christ appears. But we do know that we will be like him, for we will see him as he really is.

1st Corinthians 15:51-57 - But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet is blown. For when the trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies.

 Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: “Death is swallowed up in victory.

 O death, where is your victory?

 O death, where is your sting?”

For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1st Thessalonians 4:16-17 - For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet call of God. First, the believers who have died will rise from their graves. Then, together with them, we who are still alive and remain on the earth will be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. Then we will be with the Lord forever.

No matter what happens - no matter what is happening - I know the future - I have confidence in the future - That empowers me to have joy no matter what is going on!

 **> Answers to prayer**

John 16:23-24 - “At that time you won’t need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. You haven’t done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.”

We He comes … and we are in His presence … we won’t need to ask for anything. We will have everything.

These disciples had totally relied on Him - they were wondering what was going to happen. Jesus says, “Don’t worry, I’m coming back. I’ll take care of everything.”

In the meantime - ask God directly what we want - in His name! In other words,

**If you were asking for something that Jesus would ask for, what would it be.**

Jesus sends you to God to ask for something - what is Jesus going to ask for?

This means we need to figure out what God wants for our lives. What is His purpose for our lives.

In His purpose we find joy. We we ask for anything according to that purpose, we will be given what we ask for - that brings joy.

How do I know whether I am asking in His purpose?

* Know the Word - you’re in the right place to start.
* Here’s another way - go ahead and ask! If it happens, you were asking according to His purpose. If it doesn’t happen - you’re that much closer to knowing what His purpose is! Process of elimination!

Ask - pray - talk to God - get to know Him in His Word - Get to know the voice of His Spirit -

The more you live with someone the more you get to know them.

I know a whole bunch of things that my wife likes - I know what she doesn’t like. Most of the time I can tell what she wants before she asks - it goes both ways.

I have also walked with Jesus for a long time. I’m far from getting everything figured out - but I do know a lot of things that He wants for me - and a lot of things that He doesn’t want for me - because He knows they won’t bring me joy.

So - walk with Him - spend time with other people who know Him -

Small Groups … Growth Track ….

The more you do this the more you will be able to ask “in His name” - asking for what Jesus would ask for - and those are the prayers God is going to answer.

 **> Plain truth and love**

John 16:25-30 - “I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father. Then you will ask in my name. I’m not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf, for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God. Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father.”

 Then his disciples said, “At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. Now we understand that you know everything, and there’s no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God.”

Jesus told a lot of stories. A lot of the people were so far from understanding God that they couldn’t understand Jesus’ meaning behind these simple stories.

The disciples were beginning to understand some … but they were often confused as well. Everything was so much different than they expected …

Now - He just tells them straight up - no illustration - no story - The Father loves you dearly - that’s why I’m here - He sent me to you - I came from God. I’m getting ready to leave and go back to God.

Disciples - AAHh!! Ok! We get that!

And they believed that because of everything they had experienced with Him up to that point!

We want to be in a place where the truth is plain - and the love of God is obvious.

We want to teach the truth in a way that anyone can understand, even if today is the first day they walked into a church …

We want the love of God to be obvious here …

**You can have truth and love together … in fact, if you’re missing one you can’t have the other …**

Let’s tell the truth - God loves you dearly - Here are the things He said that would benefit your life and give you great joy - here are the things He said that would not benefit your life and actually destroy your life.

The disciples said, “We believe.” What about you?

But wait … there’s more!

 **> Peace in trouble**

John 16:31-33 - Jesus asked, “Do you finally believe? But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

There’s going to be trouble.

Jesus was going to die - His disciples would run away from Him at that point - but Jesus would go through with God’s plan. God would be with HIm. And He would rise again - then He would ascend to the Father.

Then the disciples and the followers of Jesus would be filled with the Holy Spirit - they would get bold in telling other about Jesus - then they would be hated by the Jewish people and religious leaders - they thought following Christ was blaspheming and destroying the Jewish faith.

They would be hated by the Roman Empire because the Empire took it as a rival faith and treason - they put the Emperor up as God.

So they would be hunted, beaten, tormented, abused, killed - families separated - having to watch family members killed in some of the most cruel ways.

Joy? Peace? How is this possible? Knowing that Jesus has overcome.

The ultimate victory is not in this life.

The ultimate victory - the ultimate win - the ultimate peace - the ultimate joy does not come from:

* everything always going great
* escaping problems
* getting everything you want in this life.

**This life doesn’t last - but life does!**

**(REPEAT!)**

Everyone will live forever either in the presence of pure love and pure joy because we will be in the presence of God - or we will live forever in the total absence of love - the total absence of joy - absolute torment outside the presence of God.

**This temporary life is where we decide what we will get out of the life that will last forever.**

So it has nothing to do with whether or lives seem to go good or whether we have trouble - in fact, Jesus said as a follower of His we would have trouble. That’s an indication we’re on the right track!

Thus - in that trouble - even if it is persecution - we can have joy because we know our ultimate destiny is not determined by anything that happens to us here and now!

And here’s a key to peace in trouble -

Isaiah 26:3 - You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!

**Concl:** Are you connected to these sources of joy?

* Do you have confidence for the future?
* Are you getting answers to prayer?
* Are you receiving plain truth and love?
* Do you have peace no matter what the trouble?

This is what He has for you! It’s all yours!

* Prayer for people to Know God
* Prayer for people who need joy.