

For You and Our Joy: Week 2

Summary:

What is your greatest joy? As Christians, our greatest joy is complete when we share Jesus with those around us. We exist to share Jesus with the world. We have the privilege of pouring into others in the name of Jesus. Last week we took a look at 1 John where John laid out this notion that his joy was not complete until he was able to share the story of the good news of Jesus Christ. We as Christians are lacking in Joy if we are not sharing the story of Jesus and His glory to other people.

There is nothing here on this earth that will satisfy the recesses of your heart and the gravitational pull of your soul. King Solomon spent much of his life trying to find satisfaction in the things of this world. He had the time and limitless resources at his disposal to do whatever he could to try to find something under the sun that could satisfy. We don't have the time and resources that King Solomon had so it's easy to find ourselves chasing after the things of this world to satisfy the joys of our hearts. We may find something that satisfies us temporarily, but only Jesus can truly satisfy eternally. Jesus Christ is your greatest treasure and in sharing your greatest treasure your greatest joy will be complete.

Last week we talked about discipleship and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. This week, we want to challenge you to look at the ways discipleship plays a role in your own life. Being a disciple is essentially like being a leader. But how can we be disciples if/when we've never been disciplined ourselves? Put simply, you must be a good follower before you can be a good leader. Because if not, how can you continue to pour into your followers once the knowledge that you possess comes to an end?

2 Thessalonians 1:3-4

Paul gives thanks to God for the Thessalonians because their faith in God has grown along with their love for others. Even though they faced intense persecution, they were still growing in their faith and their love for others continued to grow. As Christians, our faith in God and our love for others should follow the same upward trend. We cannot grow in our faith yet not love others well. Our love for others should be reflective of our faith in God. If your faith in Christ is growing, then your heart should be beating for your neighbors.

1 Thessalonians 1:3-6

How we respond in the midst of unrest matters. In order to be a person who wants to make disciples, you have to first be a disciple. Paul said in chapter 6 "*and you became imitators of us.*" When the Thessalonians were intensely persecuted, their resolve was to latch on to someone who

was pursuing Jesus Christ and they started to follow that person. That's how we as christ pursuers should be. We need to be disciplined before we can disciple others.

Matthew 12:22-30

We have to be for one another because a house divided against itself cannot stand. If we are of Jesus, we are gatherers. If we are of Jesus Christ then we are gathering people toward the cross. We're not pushing them away. In discipleship, our objective is to gather others toward the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the most loving thing that we can do. If we are not gathering, we are scattering. There is no middle ground.

This week we've highlighted 5 ways we scatter instead of gather others for Christ.

1. Loose living or licentiousness. You give your life to Jesus Christ but you don't fully surrender to His ways. Your conscience becomes seared and freedoms are used and abused for one's own pleasures. You don't take holiness seriously and/or you push people away by unharnessed anger, degrading words, and by a self-seeking appetite for immorality.
2. Loose lips. We're quick to gossip and to slander. We have constant side conversations that tear others down rather than lift others up. Selective hearing and ignoring alternative ways of thinking or reasoning. Unwillingness to sit down with people to address a concern or situation.
3. Legalism. We put external weights on people in which they end up walking away. When our expectations are greater for other people than they are for ourselves. Providing a list of do's and don'ts and stepping away.
4. Scattering by a lack of compassion and love. Not being sincere. Honest, authentic. Not intentional and/or compassionate in our relationships or with people we cross paths with. Task vs people.
5. Laziness. No effort in building relationships. No efforts in sharing the gospel. No effort in allowing people to see the passion you have for Jesus.

Questions for further study

Who are you following?

Are you being disciplined? If so by whom?

Who do you have in your life that is stirring your affections for Christ?

Who are you pressing towards the goodness of Jesus?

In which ways do you find yourself scattering instead of gathering?