

Good morning, so I'm sure you all can tell that Scott is not here this morning, and Bradley must not have answered his phone when Scott called him first so I guess that means you all get me today.

First off for those of you who do not know me (if you don't have 5<sup>th</sup> grade through 18 year olds you probably don't) I am Edd Schieri, my wife and I are the youth leaders here. So with that being said I am used to teaching to a bunch of 9-17 year olds. I'm sorry if my vocabulary is not what you are used to hearing from the pulpit.

So about 6 weeks ago Scott told me he was going on a trip this weekend and asked me if I would preach today. He said pray about it and let me know, if any of you have been to Scott about an issue that is exactly what he will always ask you first thing, have you been praying about it. So I started praying, and everything was pointing to me being up here today. But none of it helped to calm my nerves.

Those of you who know me know that I have no problem talking; in fact most people say that I talk way too much. And for the most part I have never really been afraid of anything, but this has scared me to death!

So after realizing that this is what God wanted me to do, then I had to figure out what he wanted me to teach. I really think that is what scared me the most. You see I know God will do His part but I was more worried that I would not be able to hold up my end. But through a lot of praying and some conversations that helped me to realize what He wanted taught this morning, I've calmed down a little(until about 10 mins ago). So please bear with me as I do my best to teach Gods word for the first time to a room full of adults.

1<sup>st</sup> though we would like to recognize couple of our students who have graduated this year.

Aaron and

These two young men have accomplished a great task. We all know that this is one of many to come. This is an exciting time, free from high school, all the late nights cramming for a test the next day, all the rushed mornings trying to get to school on time. I'm sure there are tons of things you must be looking forward to. But take these words and apply them as you may. Remember this is just one season of your life, God has plenty more in store for you. As this chapter ends and new one begins, keep God in the forefront. Take time to listen to what He is directing you towards next. I'm sure that everyone will agree that we are all here for you if ever need advice, guidance or just someone to listen.

We are going to be reading in Galatians 5 verse 22

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control. Against such things there is no law.

Pray

We live in a world today that is full of depression, unfulfillment, despair and dissatisfaction.

Everyone tries to fill the holes in their lives with hobbies, or friends, or things.

The problem is not that we want things as long as it's not in excess that's ok. But when we try to find our joy in worldly stuff, that's when we are heading down the wrong road.

Those of you who have kids, do they watch YouTube? Our 3 boys would live off of YouTube if we'd let them. So I asked them what it is they watch.

It was a video of a person cutting lines across a bar of soap, then cutting down the bar slowly so the little cubes would fall off. Or they were watching a bar of soap, different colors, and designs. All you see is the person's hands, the knife and the soap.

I asked them what it is they get out of that, and they said it was just so satisfying. Then I was in despair. I just can't understand it.

But this is the world we live in. People don't find joy in completing a job, or finishing a project, they don't find fulfillment in anything they do, and they have no joy in life.

What makes you happy? Come on tell the truth. I love going 4 wheeling!

What makes you unhappy?

What about how we feel on the inside? Do we always look on the outside how we feel on the inside? Scott has talked about it several times, how we can be fighting like crazy in the car the whole way to church but as soon as we get out of the car it's like we live in the perfect little life and nothing is wrong. Someone asks us how we are doing and the answer is always "I'm fine, and how are you?"

I don't know about you all but sometimes when I get up, I am just not feeling it!

But what do we do, we put on our fake happy face and go on about our day. We all know someone who wants to sulk in their feelings but for the most part I think we all just don't want to share how we really feel.

Today we are talking about the difference between Joy and Happiness. They are some people who would say they are the same but they in fact are totally different.

The word happy comes from the same root word as happen. So it is easy to see how when something good happens to us we feel happy, but what happens when something bad happens? That happiness is gone isn't it.

What does that tell us about our happiness? It is temporary! One minute we are happy because things are going our way, but the next that happiness could be gone.

The word joy in Greek is chara and it means gladness, or rejoice, be glad.

The word joy is not necessarily wrong it just falls short of the original meaning.

Matthew 5:11-12 says "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Verse 12 shows that while we may not be happy, we can still rejoice.

Our Joy on the other hand should not be affected by what is going on around us. It stays deep in our hearts no matter what. No matter the circumstance we should still have joy.

That doesn't mean that we will be happy about every bad situation or trial that we go through.

John McAuthor said " that the measure of a person's spiritual character, spiritual strength and spiritual maturity is what it takes to steal their joy" Whatever it is it takes to break down your joy is the level of how mature we are.

We see how spiritually controlled we are by when bitterness and hatred starts to take over. The measure of our joy how we react when things don't go our way, it's easy to have joy or happiness when things turn out the way we want them to.

In the book Hells best kept secrets by Ray Comfort he uses an illustration of 2 passengers on a plane given a parachute

- the first one is told to put it on because it would improve his flight.

- the second is told to put it on because at any minute he'd be jumping from the plane.

The first one eventually takes his off because it does not improve his flight, it's uncomfortable, heavy, and the other passengers are laughing at him for having it on.

The second one barely notices the weight or the uncomfortableness. Instead his mind is consumed with the thought of what would happen if he had to jump without it, as a result he barely notices the other passengers mocking him, as he has a deep rooted sense of joy and peace, knowing he is safe from death

There are a few different people we could look at for their joy, or the fact that they didn't lose their joy in the hard times, but today it's the life of Paul that we will be looking at.

In Philippians 4 we are commanded to rejoice all the time, in all things and in all circumstances. So according to this, there should be no breaking point for our joy.

As a believer we should always remember that our joy is not to be forfeited over something that did not turn out the way we wanted it to.

I am sorry if someone told you that following Christ would always be easy, or that just for asking Jesus to come into your heart that you'd get a puppy.

In John 16:33 says "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.

Do you think Jesus was a liar? Then we should be expecting it.

The good news is we know that God has greater plans for our lives, so if we are going through something, He has a purpose for it. So it is not to take our joy.

So our joy comes from God, it is something we receive when the Holy Spirit moves in.

Paul is a great example of how this should work. I'm sure most of you have heard the story of Paul maybe not in full but some.

He was born a Roman citizen, he was taught by the famous rabbi Gamaliel (Gamel iel) how to be a traditional Pharisees.

And for the first part of his life went city to city persecuting Jews for their faith in Jesus. Had them arrested and put in prison.

But one day on the road to Damascus his life would take startling turn. God broke him down and let the truth be explained to him.

This would take Paul from Christianities chief persecutor, to its greatest missionary. From then on Paul would preach and teach about God and His ways.

**Accused.** As he was teaching, his companions and people that they taught, told him of his arrest that was to come.

But Paul told them that he was ready to be bound and even put to death in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

When he arrived in Jerusalem he was welcomed by other believers. But they told him that others had heard of him and already were looking for a way to get rid of him.

He submitted to having a ceremonial cleansing in the temple but this did not appease the Jews. So some of the Jews accused him of taking a "Greek" into the temple and "defiling this holy place" which was a capital offence.

The other accusation was telling Jews they did not have to follow certain religious laws since Jesus' death and resurrection they were not required to maintain these laws.

Paul was a man who knew how to appeal to the people he was around. When he was around Jews he observed Jewish laws, when he was around gentiles he acted like gentiles. And when in the company of Romans he acted like Romans. But this was all to get them to realize that God would come to them where they were.

This raised such uproar that the commander came to see what was going on and arrested Paul because of the allegations against him. But instead of Paul fighting back he asked if he could speak to the people before he was taken away.

He gave them his testimony to them, explaining how he had lived and what God instructed him to do. The Jews did not believe him and wanted him killed.

**Arrested.** Paul would spend the next 2 years of his life in prison. He was interviewed multiple times, by the high priest and different leaders.

Through his defense they could never find any fault in him. The governor of Caesarea Felix, requested to speak with Paul about his charges but when Paul spoke it scared Felix.

Felix wanted to hear more from Paul and expected Paul to try and bribe him; but all Paul ever talked about was righteousness, self control and the judgment to come.

You see even in bad situations if we keep our faith in Jesus he will keep filling us with joy. Paul knew that God had a bigger plan for him and all he wanted to do was spread the gospel. He kept the joy that Jesus had given him.

Preacher/ hole in one.

See our happiness is based on what is going on right now.

**Acquitted.** As the story goes Paul wanted to be tried in Rome, so they set sail for Rome.

Paul tried to tell the others that it was not a good idea to go then but the men insisted. During their journey a great storm came upon them.

The men on board were so scared; they tried everything to ensure their survival.

Paul tells them in the middle of all the chaos that only the ship and its contents will be lost, and that none of them will be harmed.

How many times are we in a storm and we do all we can to fix it, all we can to survive it. But do we look to Jesus to protect us?

Or do we forget that he is in control of it all. Through His grace we strengthened.

Eventually they make it to Rome, Paul is heard and acquitted of all the accusations against him.

But Paul is imprisoned again, this time chained to a guard 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for 2 more years.

He was in a private home not a jail cell like we might imagine. And he was allowed to have guests whenever he wanted.

During this time he proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

See Paul had a longing to reach these people; he wrote them long before telling them that he wanted to come see them.

I bet he did not expect to get there the way that he did. Through trials, being accused by his own people, through being imprisoned for years over something that he didn't do, surviving a hurricane and being ship wrecked. Paul kept the joy the Lord had given him.

While in jail he wrote what we know as the prison epistles.

These include Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon. Most of these were written to specific local churches.

Covering everything from doctrine and application, salvation by grace, church unity and spiritual warfare in Ephesians.

In Philippians it was mostly thanking them for their financial support to his ministry.

Despite Paul's situation during this time he was not hindered from sharing the gospel.

Acts 28:30-31 says "He lived there two whole years at his own expense, and welcomed all who came to him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness and without hindrance"

Even after all he had been through God had empowered Paul to change lives, Paul was able to keep his joy no matter what was happening around him.

If we have Jesus in our hearts we should always have joy, our happiness can be whatever it is going to be at the moment, but we should always have a rejoicing in our hearts.

If you are here today and you don't have that joy, you don't know that joy. There is no better time than now, no better time than today to receive it.

God wants to give it to each of us. Not because we earn it, and definitely not because we deserve it.

But because He loves YOU more than you will ever know! Please don't wait.

If you have known that joy before and you've lost it, maybe today He is calling you to come back to Him.

He wants to fill us all with everlasting joy.

Pray

Time, graduates, joy, His love, safe travels for pastors