

Joy in the Journey

Joy in the Journey story

So I want to start with a story. A number of years ago, Sarah and I had the chance to live small place in a very remote location. Our schedule was, that we would usually be there for 12 weeks and then return back here to Campbell River. We would repeat this pattern 3 or 4 times a year. As we would go up, it would take about 22-24 hours of driving, usually over about 3 days and we'd typically about 8-10 hours grocery shopping at the largest center, Prince George buying more of our groceries for the next 3 months. The last day was this 8- 10-12 hour trek, mostly on logging roads on the final leg to get to our home. An in preparation- for this 7 day trip- I would often focus on the destination- this idea being in our northern home- truck is parked, everything is put away, kids are sleeping, Sarah and I are sitting on the couch and I'm telling Sarah how much I appreciate her. As we would prepare for this every time there was sort of this anticipation and excitement, but there was always this awareness because, well because something would always happen. Maybe it was something little, usually it was something big, or at least big at the time. If you watched this journey, this trek and you watched me and you said "Well how is Jeff living out love, joy, peace, patience, kindness gentleness, goodness, and self-control, well let's just say that on some days, if you ranked each out of 10, you'd probably be in the 0.01 range. I'm married to this extremely wise woman, and she would say "Jeff- there is joy in the journey". She would gently encourage me to look around, be present, reflect what was going on, how God was working in that day, that moment. That's what I want to share about with you today- this was in about 10 years ago, and I feel like I am finally slowing down enough to start to understand what she meant.

Journey

Creation

So where do we start? Well, like in any story you start in the beginning. We know that in the beginning God created everything. And as he made everything he reflected and he said "it was good" and then we see in Genesis 1:31 at the end of the 6th day "Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was **very good!**" So that's the start, the beginning.

Fall

And then after that we see God in relationship with Adam and Eve in the garden, and somehow they did not recognize, appreciate, they did not understand what they had, and so they turned to something else. Sometimes I think its easy to look back and think "Why didn't they realise what they had, why were they so ungrateful? I can tell you, if you looked at my life, I'm always looking, thirsting for something more, something else. You would observe that I'm not satisfied in God and what He gives

me. Somehow I don't trust that God will give me what I need. Does this sound familiar?

Rescue

So we have the beginning the start, creation, and then something happens, we sometimes call this fall. And then after that, as we look through this huge story of God, all the history we see this rescue plan underway as God pursues his people. As we look through the first part of the Bible, we call it the old testament, we see all these smaller stories that follow this pattern, we learn about these stories of rescue. And we also see God describing, sometime hinting, sometimes bluntly telling his people about his rescue plan, the Rescuer. And for thousands of years, His people waited for their rescuer, their Messiah to come. There is this passage in Isaiah, and there are so many passages we could look at here, it described the rescuer: OT Isaiah? 9:6 ⁶ For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Luke 2:10

Let's look at our story today- its found in Luke 2:10.

Context- shepherds- Bethlehem, Timing. Shepherd- unlikely witness, really story

The story goes something like this: Mary and Joseph go to Bethlehem and Jesus is born and as this is happening, the are these shepherds in the field and they are watching her sheep. So one thing you might not know about me is that I'm a shepherd.- story of Bethlehem

God's ways are not our ways. Why did God wait so long between the fall and this? All this time in between. shepherds? At this time shepherd's they with the amongst the lowest part of the culture their testimony was not acceptable in court- they were not a reliable witness. Nobody would believe them. God does this again when Christ rises from the grave, who does God choose for the first eyewitnesses and the messengers? 3 women- Mary, Mary and Joanna.

Luke 2:8–20 (NLT)

The Shepherds and Angels

⁸ That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.

⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹ The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

Euangelizo- proclaim good news

will bring

great Chara- joy

The part that we're really going to focus on here is, obviously they were terrified. There is this single angel- these is grace in that- God sends the single angel first. It says the angel "reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. I bring you good news" - this is often translated proclaim good news. When you have your the word Gospel that is where comes from- proclaim good news. It's also where we get the word Evangelism.

In the next part it says "will bring" and that is this anticipation, it is this tension that we all live in - this here but not yet.

In the last part- "great joy"- the word great is like this heaviness, this significance. We'll talk about joy- the word that they use there is Chara and who is that joy for? All people.

Joy

What is Joy? Heb. śimḥâ- to be excited; Gk. Chara- intense joy- there is an intensity to joy- like sadness and grief, happiness- momentary- intense, steady, can also be transient- like a revelation.

Emotion, but not only on emotion. A way of being. Quality- grounded in God and from God. Joy is deeply connected to love, often requires reflection. Can have joy and happiness at the same time- can have joy in the midst of grief or pain.

(Ps. 16:11; Phil. 4:4; Rom. 15:13) Anticipation- joy of being w Christ in heaven (Rev 19:7)

So what is this Joy? There are 2 main words that are used in the bible to describe joy. The first one is a Hebrew word and it is śimḥâ , which means to be excited. The second word which is mostly in the New Testament is a Greek word : chara and it means intense joy. That is one part of joy that is important. There is an intensity to it . We think their sadness and then there is grief- there is different levels to it- so there is this intensity to joy. Of course in this part it is there is great or heavy joy that will be for all the people. Joy is an emotion. It is a feeling but it is not only an emotion. It is also a way of being, it's a quality. For those of us who have identify ourselves as children of God, this quality is grounded in God, it comes from God. Somehow it is deeply connected to love. Now for us to be joyful often, it requires us to be reflective, you have to think about things. Joy is confusing because you can have joy and sadness at the same time. Sometimes we can have joy when we're going through grief. For those of us who know Christ there is this anticipation of the ultimate joy of being with Christ in heaven.

So as I said earlier joy is partly an emotion and I think that can make some of us feel uncomfortable. The joy of the Lord is clearly described throughout all of scripture. We can clearly see Christ experiencing emotions as a human. In Genesis it describes humans as being created in God's image, we have physical bodies, and we also have this enduring, spiritual part in each of us. It was not a surprise to God that we

experienced emotions after he made us, somehow our emotions, at least in our current bodies, are connected to our brains, but its also deeper than that. You can actually do a video type of MRI where you watch what's going on in someone's brain. Researches have studied people by playing music that we think makes people feel joyful, or fearful, and you can actually look at patterns in which part of the brain are processing these emotions. I think our understanding of this part of this is pretty basic still. Both the ancient Egyptians and Greeks considered the heart - not the brain -- to be the source of our thought, feeling, and will. It's easy to look back on that and laugh, but I think the real answer is way more complicated and well probably look back in 20 or 30 years and laugh at what we understand today. God clearly wired our physical bodies to experience emotions including joy. We are fearfully and wonderfully made.

Trauma, depression, grief

So while we're on the subject of joy I want her to take a minute to talk about trauma and depression and grief. There can be joy in the midst of sorrow and there is a real thing called depression and grief and trauma. We live in a world where bad things happen. Sometimes we do those bad things, sometimes those things happen to us but I can tell you from experience it impacts us. Sometimes when we have been exposed to all kinds of terrible things it starts to build up and it really impacts us. If we do not pay attention to that, well being joyful becomes really hard. I think sometimes in our Christian faith we would move into this works based teaching. We say joy is important, you should be joyful and if you're not happy that is not okay. I disagree. Trauma is real. If you break her leg and it becomes crooked. If you do not get it fixed right away, it can be made straight again later, but it might take a long time or require significant intervention. It can be like that with trauma. The trauma can rewire the brain so it does not light up like the pictures I showed you earlier. What about depression? In our everyday lives we have good days and we have bad days. Sometimes we feel happy, or angry, or sad, or joyful. Sometimes good things happen and we feel good, and hard things happen and we feel sad. Depression is when you feel sad most of the time and the normal things in life that helps this feel better like exercise or being with people or being alone or reading the word or meditating or praying- do not help you feel better. Just like most of us can't straighten out a bone that has healed crooked, depression also requires specialized care and help. Grief is when something terrible happens and we feel a whole range of emotions. It can take a really long time to work through all of the emotions like sadness, anger, blame, fear, frustration and so many others. My reason for bringing these forward- because being joyful or becoming more joyful can be a lot more in these circumstances. So I would just encourage you if you experiencing some of the things I am talking about, talk to one of the staff, go see your doctor or nurse practitioner and get help. And yes, some of us will have the amazing experience of miraculous healing.

Pattern Journey

Person- beginning (start) , fall, rescue, restore

- this pattern, journey takes place on a million different scales.

Little and big journeys- nested- Russian wooden dolls- it is the big story of the universe, , sometimes it takes a years or decades to come to restore part. In lots of cases, we won't get to see the whole journey while we are on earth. happens to us every day, or in an instant.

So where does joy fit in? God's Joy, Christ's Joy, Our Joy

Joy in the Bible

Luke 15 Parables about joy

1. Lost sheep- who is joyful - Shepherd- God- when- sheep is rescued- why -every sheep matters—inside the story- rescuer
2. Lost coin who is joyful- Lady, her neighbour and the angels- when- coin is lost- inside the story- rescuer
3. 2 sons- who is joyful- the father, when- when his son returns, why son chose to come home, son had new identity.- inside, but not rescuer- directly

Christ as human brings great joy

- a. His birth Lk 2:10
- b. Being in his presence like the joy of a wedding Mt 22:1-10
- c. His resurrection and ascension Jn 16:20-22
- d.

Paul found joy :

1. People growing in their faith as children of God- brings joy to others (1 Thes. 2:19, Phil. 2:2)
2. a gift of the Holy Spirit Gal. 5:2,2 John 16:20), dynamic and not static. from love—God's and ours—closely associated with love in fruit of the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:16; Phil. 3:1; 4:4; 1 Pet. 1:8). ?
3. Joy can come from suffering and even sorrow for Christ's sake (Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 6:10 cf. 1 Pet. 4:13; Heb. 10:34,)- shipwreck- beaten... the Joy comes from God- comment re trauma, grief, depression

What about my joy?

I know that the disciples felt joy- being with Jesus, but what about this afternoon?

I think part of it lies in reflecting on how this at work in my life. We play every role. Hero, main character, cause the fall, rescuer, audience, sometimes connected- like the other brother, woman's neighbours.

Truths - 1.- we are in the big story. There is Joy in our journey.

Welcome to the village- story

When/ How/ Why do **we** experience joy?

1. Gospel- Love God
2. Love People

Ok, so fine, I am part of a bigger story and I am a child of God, and there is joy. But how do I feel it? How do I get it how to experience it? There are 3 parts in the new Testament- twice in Philippians, and once in Thessalonians that basically say- be joyful all the time. Really? 1 Thessalonians 5:14-22:

“Encourage those who are timid. Take tender care of those who are weak. Be patient with everyone. ¹⁵ See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people. ¹⁶ Always be joyful. ¹⁷ Never stop praying. ¹⁸ Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus. ¹⁹ Do not stifle the Holy Spirit. ²⁰ Do not scoff at prophecies, ²¹ but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. ²² Stay away from every kind of evil. “

Are you joyful all the time? How often do you pray? Are you thankful in all circumstances? and yes I actually want to know! So get our your devices- log into menti.com tap in this code 941515. 0-10, 1 being 1 hour a day and 10 being 10 hours a day. How often are you joyful? How often do you pray? Or thankful? Remember I set the bar at 0.1 for the fruit of the spirit! I ranked myself at a 1, but to be honest, that's really generous.

So how do we get to be more joyful? I think this is the thing because I think me standing here saying you should be joyful all the time- what does that actually look like?

I've often heard Pastor Jeff say- what it look like for me to be more like Christ this year than I am this year. Quite frankly how would it look like tomorrow?

Self reflection

<https://www.mentimeter.com/public/a6e8f9cb4031c1703be22ab2f7f41cdc>

How's it going? Are you joyful? Do you pray? Are you thankful? Phil 3:1, 4:4



Gratitude- hardwire brain for joy - actual change –. Gratitude- faith-hope- love

1. Slow down- Stop. Make time to reflect . we don't need more. look at creation- Give God glory.
2. Reflect- Where is God at work in your journey? What are you thankful for?
Start small. Be careful!

Grateful? look at your story how has God been faithful? – how will he take care of me today?.- connection between gratitude- thankfulness and faith.

3. Write it down.
4. Try it for a week

Mary- reflection

Birth- Mary Luke 2:19 Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often

John 16:20- Christ at last supper Have you ever watched a baby being born? John 16:”

²¹ 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. ²² So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy.

Benediction

Luke 1:46-55