

The Joy of the Lord and Our Friendship with Christ

Scripture Reading: John 15:11-15

Consider John 15:11. *“These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.”* As Christ was teaching His disciples, in John chapters 13-16, He was preparing them to operate with a joy that the world could not give them. This joy of the Lord is not natural. This joy would not be understood until after Christ’s death on the cross and His resurrection. In John 15:1-21 we are going to examine five elements of this joy that the Lord wants to give His people.

The Elements of Joy found in John 15:1-21 (Key verse: John 15:11)

- Fundamental crucial connection with Christ – John 15:1-7,16
- Fruitful living as we follow Christ – John 15:8,16
- Focus on Christ’s love / Faithfulness to His primary commandment of love – John 15:9-13,17
- Friendship with Christ – John 15:13-15
- Fractured relationship with the world for Christ’s sake – John 15:18-21

In this lesson we will look at the fourth element of this list.

Friendship with Christ – John 15:13-15

- Christ was a friend to us. He sacrificed Himself to secure our friendship – John 15:13 cp. Romans 5:8-11.
- Christ calls us into a working relationship. We will dedicate ourselves to His purposes. – John 15:14 cp. James 2:20-23; Proverbs 18:24.
- Christ calls us into intimate communion as partners. We are not just employees. – John 15:15 cp. Exodus 33:11a; John 14:23; Ephesians 2:4-6; I Corinthians 2:9-16.
 - Christ’s followers are to be “*knowing*” people (“*Know/knowing*” – James 1:2-3; Romans 5:3-5; 8:28; I John 4:16 cp. Ephesians 3:17-19).

- See the communication from the Father, and the Son to us (John 6:63; 7:16; 12:49; 14:26; 15:26; 16:12-15; I John 1:1-4; 2:20-26 cp. John 5:24-27; 10:27-30; Matthew 10:16-20; Luke 21:12-15).
- The more you know and believe, the greater capacity for joy (Romans 15:13 cp. James 1:2-3). Ignorance is not bliss – it is misery (Ephesians 4:17-19; Hosea 4:6; Ephesians 5:14-17; I Timothy 4:13,15-16; II Timothy 3:13-17 cp. Colossians 3:16; Psalm 1:1-3; 130:5-6; 16:7-11).

[Don't misuse Solomon's statement and rob yourself of a blessing – Ecclesiastes 12:12]

The Joy of the Lord and the war against sin

Since Jesus is called, *“the friend of sinners”* we need to understand that this is not an invitation to a casual and careless friendship that we can take for granted. Because Christ showed Himself a friend to the sinful does not mean that we are to do nothing about sin and remain sinful in our thoughts and actions. Jesus came to save us **from** our sins, not **in** our sins (Matthew 1:21 cp. I John 1:5 – 2:6).

If someone saw their friend drowning, they would do things to deliver their friend from drowning. They would not smile and say, *“I love you”* while their friend was thrashing in the water, choking, and dying! Christ saw us perishing and sacrificed everything to come to our rescue. We need to be saved out of sin, just as the other person needed to be saved out of the water.

Look at the two passages where Jesus is called, *“the friend of sinners.”* In both passages there is certainly a message that shows the need for sinners to repent:

- Matthew 11:16-30 – In verses 20-21, Jesus wanted people to repent of their sin. When we are yoked with Christ, we begin to walk in a new life that is empowered by Christ. See Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:11; 3:10; 4:13.
- Luke 7:31-50 – Those who have been forgiven much will love much. A life of loving Christ will lead us to a transformed life that is turning away from the former sinful life. See II Corinthians 5:14-21; John 14:15-27.

If we harbor sinful thoughts and actions, we rob ourselves of the joy of the Lord. Christ intends better pleasures for us, His friends (Psalm 16:11; John 15:11; 16:19-24,33; 17:12-18).