

## The Joy of the Lord and Our Friendship with the World

Scripture Reading: John 15:18-21

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 fifth element of this list.

### Fractured relationship with the world for Christ’s sake – John 15:18-21

We are told to not love the world (I John 2:15-17). We are told to not even desire to be friends with the world (James 4:1-4). We are told to not let the world push us into conformity with its nature and its agenda (Romans 12:1-2). This is a very big and important topic that cannot be fully developed in this lesson.

The term “world,” in these passages, is referring to an invisible kingdom that is controlled by Satan and is populated with all those who do not belong to the kingdom of God’s dear Son through faith in the gospel (II Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:12-14). The “world” is sinful, contrary to God. It has an antichrist spirit. The world is a confusing mixture of...

- Spirituality and atheistic materialism
- Hypocritical righteousness and blatant wickedness
- Pride and humility
- Merciful kindness, and hateful, selfish cruelty
- Loving sacrifice and selfishness
- Pleasure and pain
- Humor and Horror
- Beauty and grotesque ugliness
- Health and death
- Knowledge and philosophy, with ignorance, stupidity, and lies
- Meticulous effort and careless neglect

See II Corinthians 11:1-4,13-15; I John 2:18-26; 4:1-6; 5:18-21

## **What to Expect**

In John 15:18-21, Christ is not instructing us about how to handle the world. He is warning us how the world is going to handle us. The world says, “No good deed shall go unnoticed.” But the truth is that “No good deed shall go unpunished” – particularly, whatever is of God and honors God. The world will find a way to take God’s Word and God’s work and cause a distraction. The world attempts to twist and mangle the things of God - or to remove them altogether. See Psalm 1; 2; 10; 14; Romans 1:18-32; 2:1-25; 3:9-20; I Corinthians 1:18-31; 2:6-8,12-14; Jude 1:3-16.

As Christ has been calling us to have a crucial connection with himself, a fruitful relationship based on love and friendship, He now warns us that the world will recognize our relationship with Him and will respond by mocking, spurning, punishing, even killing us. Much of the time, we are doing something right when we are rejected by the world.

Be careful! We are not to seek persecution from the world. Many people earn the ire of the world by their obnoxious personalities, along with their anti-social beliefs and practices. Some are persecuted because of the world’s pre-existing biases (political, religious, racial, etc.). So, it is possible to get persecution which is not any evidence that you are on the right track with God.

Your job is to love God, His Son, His kingdom, and His Word. Your job is to live an exemplary life and to lovingly share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others. Some will come to faith and will love you for what you’ve done. Others will criticize and condemn you, as they already do to God and to those things that remind them of Him. The following is a list of a few passages of Scripture to reinforce what Jesus has said in John 15:18-21.

- Matthew 5:10-12; 10:16-42
- John 16:1-33
- II Timothy 3:12
- I Peter 4:12-19
- I John 3:1,9-13; 5:1-5
- I Corinthians 2:11-16
- II Corinthians 2:14-17

### **Take-home points from this lesson:**

- The world is difficult to perceive because of its confusing ways.
- If you are born-again, you can identify the world more easily and separate from its ways.
- If you are born again, but not operating in the power of the joy of the Lord, you will have problems identifying the world and separating from its ways.
- The world is unreliable and deceitful. It does not produce what it promises.
- God is faithful and true. He does what He promises to do.
- Whom the world loves the world cannot protect (From God or from anyone else).
- Whom the world hates the world cannot destroy if they are under the love and protection of God.
- Loving the world is a fatal attraction.
- Don't hate people or you will become like the world.
- Don't fear people or you will be under the control of the world.
- Love people, so that you can rescue them from the world.
- Love God supremely and you will eventually have a fractured relationship with this world.
- Don't let Satan, the world, or personal sin rob you of the joy of the Lord.
- It is God's plan to deliver you and separate you from the world. He also has the power to do it.

### **Concluding Scripture:**

Galatians 1:3-5; 2:20; 6:14; John 16:33; 18:36-37; II Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1; I John 2:15-17; Romans 8:26-39; Philippians 1:6; I Thessalonians 5:23-24; I Peter 1:3-9.