

Unusual Joy

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 20 December 2020

Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

[0 : 0 0] folks it is good to be here and i'm glad to see you all again um and my thanks to cameron and ruth thank you ruth it was wonderful we weren't expecting to hear some live singing this morning but that's fantastic surprise and we're looking forward to christmas eve as well which is on thursday not wednesday um but that's okay many of us have lots on our minds uh and my thanks as well to david for the two readings one of well both of which i got mixed up with and the verses were the wrong way about which is why the first one uh went right into king herod chasing the the baby down um and which is why the second reading not all of it was up there my fault but that's okay that's okay and my thanks to everyone you know you might not know but in that nativity video there that was representation of the three churches bell's hill calderwood baptist church and kilmarnock baptist church a group effort obviously the stars of the show being stephen ruth and uh cameron there with his mop it's absolutely fantastic and it's great that we can do things like this despite all that's going on you know it's good and this morning we are talking about an unusual joy and it might not feel like we have much room for joy these days but there is there is um and the the nativity video was kind of adapted from this fantastic book called there's a line in my nativity and it talks about all these unusual things that we might not normally think of but let me pray and then we'll talk about joy god our heavenly father we thank you that we can gather here today in the name of your son jesus we thank you that we are able to do this um and in a year where we have not always been able to do this we thank you for all that you're doing from the creation of all things up until this point you are in control you're a good god you're always at work lord we thank you that we have your word that we can trust your word we can rely on your word and that when everything else fades away your word remains and as we open your word this morning many different parts lord we pray that by your spirit you would speak to us you would encourage us and let us see your son jesus fill us with joy and hope through your spirit amen well who do you think of in your mind who do you think of when you hear the word joy somebody come to mind who brings you joy or what joyful people come to mind i wonder if it's easier to think about people who grumble i'm sure there have been times when all of us have grumbled i know that i have many times the question is do we know more grumblers than rejoicers or are we ourselves more prone to grumble than to rejoice what do people think of us are we rejoicers in people's minds or are we grumblers it's one of those things actually in the bible that gets way more attention than we would think in fact there's a very specific and surprising period of grumbling in the bible in the old testament despite the great variety and quantity of serious sin and unbelief that goes

throughout the entire history of god's people there's a particular point and period of time when people are noted for their grumbling do any of you know where it is absolutely it's in the exodus in the wilderness just after the exodus after this spectacular and miraculous rescue from slavery and oppression where god demonstrated his power over pharaoh his power over the superpower egypt over their army and over nature itself how is it that these free people can then grumble well you might think to yourself if you know the story you might think 40 years is a long time to wander in the wilderness it really is there's a lot you could rack up to grumble about in that time 40 years is a long time so here's a question how far into those 40 years do you think it was before they began to grumble what do you think it took just three days three days three days imagine that you've just walked through the middle of the red sea on sunday and by wednesday you're grumbling you've lived a hard-knock life of slavery but god turns up in spectacular power and sets you free but three days later you're complaining about water you've seen all manner of plagues come against those who enslaved you you've seen them being finally crushed as god hears your cries finally you're freed as god makes them surrender he then opens the sea for you to get away from them and from that place for good you even sing in celebration at the other side when the waters close on your enemies as they chase you down but later that same very week the grumblers start grumbling now obviously water is important you can't go very long without water but they could have asked god without grumbling and so mooses did ask god and they were given water in fact once again they were given water miraculously but god also made that day a statute and a rule to test them telling them to just listen to his voice and do what is right and do what he commanded so they encamped there by the water they enjoyed the water joy when there was provision well if they didn't last long the first time before they grumbled should they last any longer after this well after they left that place in elam in exodus 16 verse 1 it actually tells us it took just over a month 15 days into the second month after they departed from the land of egypt they began grumbling just 45 days after leaving egypt not only did they grumble this time but they curse the freedom that god has given them they look at god's power against egypt that freed them and now wish it had killed them along with the egyptians you imagine that in fact they're basically wishing that they were egyptian slaves rather than the people of this god because at least they would be well fed this is this is the antithesis of joy after the spectacular exodus the antithesis of joy coming from the people very recently rescued it's unbelievable and that's the section where the old testament talks about grumbling in relation to ungrateful freed slaves they grumble about the kind of freedom god has given them and even begin to grumble about the provisions that he gives them in that

freedom they think of their oppressors more fondly than their rescuer and so they grumble about his life-giving provision from heaven they start to grumble even about the manna that god provides from heaven and it's then worth noting that in the very place in john's gospel where people are noted as being grumbling it happens in chapter 6 when jesus says i am the bread that came down from heaven and so they grumbled it's the same thing as he went on to explain how he's the true bread of life that people must accept his provision they grumbled and many stopped following him at that point it appears like some of them are no different than the ones who grumbled about the manna in the wilderness it's the antithesis of joy we don't want this rescuer we don't want this kind of freedom we don't want this provision give us something else give us the food in egypt when we were slaves we don't want this we would rather be slaves enjoying the pleasures of our oppression but here's the question has the world changed much has it really it's not get the same kind of attitude throughout the whole world i myself had it once and it's easy to grumble about things it really is you get people who grumble about many things but what's particularly striking is the people who grumble about god's rescue and god's provision and we hear that all the time this day some people just don't want the bread from heaven that's the the crux of it they don't want god's bread from heaven they would rather be slaves indulging in sin and although that might seem to promise joy and a lure of pleasure as the writer of hebrews says about moises they're just really the fleeting pleasures of sin they're fleeting it says about moises that he considered the reproach of christ greater wealth than the treasures of egypt for he was looking to the reward and that's the kind of joy that we want isn't it not fleeting but hoping anticipating waiting expecting would you like to know that joy wouldn't you rather be joyful than grumbling it's probably not hard to imagine a world full of grumbling is it but can you imagine for a moment can you imagine if the whole world was filled with joy how amazing would that be every person the whole entire world filled with joy what a wonderful place it would be that we would be filled with joy not just us but our loved ones our neighbors strangers even our enemies filled with joy not at the expense of others but if instead of strife and sorrow grumbling and violence the world would be filled with joy that would be an amazing thing be an amazing place if that was the case here's the thing god doesn't want the world to be full of grumbling he doesn't he sent us one and only son so that it would be good news good news of great joy for who for all the people not just some all the people god doesn't want a world full of grumbling and as the song goes joy to the world there are joyful things what are the things in your life that brings you joy see we all have joyful things that we experience don't we what are they what things do you find joy in

it's not wrong to find joy in many things god has made the world this way that we would experience joy but what are the things then that rob you of joy because there are many of those things we've all experienced things robbing us of joy and i'm sure right now there are many of us that are experiencing that right now joy is being robbed away and as much as we learn from sorrow and grow in suffering brothers we're not made for these things we're made for joy god made us for joy so when thinking about those passages that david shared in matthew and luke what is worthy of great joy matthew 2 10 says that the magi when they saw the star they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy and in luke 2 10 the angel said to the shepherd fear not for behold i bring you good good news good news of great joy for all the people this is no ordinary joy that they're talking about i mean joy is good but great joy is great don't you want great joy i want great joy imagine a world where everyone is rejoicing exceedingly with great joy how amazing but it seems like our world just does the opposite at the moment doesn't it and i'm not saying that that's without reason i'm not saying it's without reason that there's a lack of joy but wouldn't it be great if instead of this the world was rejoicing exceedingly with great joy it would be great but that is who the angel said this great joy is for the whole world for all the people if that were not so would we be here today if it were not for all the people would any of us be gathered in this place right now would any of us even know god if it were not for all the people see church this thing that we do it's not just a self-help a self-help temple we are not here just to help one another in some sort of self-help way that's not what this is about we gather because we have been gathered by god we've been gathered into the kingdom of his beloved son we don't just get together because it's nice and it is but we don't get together because of that we are called together in christ we've been gathered together with him in the heavenly places and what we see here on earth is a dim reflection of what is in heaven see our gathering in the name of jesus is an answer to the prayer your kingdom come your will be done here on earth as it is in heaven brothers and sisters friends this gathering that we have here this morning is a reflection of what our true nature in christ is gathered together it's a dim reflection of that but it is evident of that a reflection of that and a picture of that to the world this church exists because this great joy that they're talking about is for all the people even us see joy is mentioned in the bible a couple of hundred times but great joy is only mentioned a handful of times and perhaps you read a bit about that in the devotional book by david mathis but here's a wee list of the times that great joy is mentioned in the bible there is great joy at solomon becoming david king david's successor there is great joy as

hezekiah reinstates the passover after a time of evil kings when the passover was done away with there is great joy at nehemiah's rebuilt walls being dedicated see these things are representative of the kingdom of god coming as it should after that there is great joy at the birth of jesus the messiah the arrival of the christ then after that there is great joy at the resurrection of jesus from the dead and then after that there is great joy as he ascends into heaven to the father's right hand and then after that there's great joy at the inclusion of the gentiles isn't that a joy to us who are gentiles who are grafted into this wonderful kingdom eternal life in christ's name great joy at that and then the very last time great joy is mentioned is in jude and it hasn't happened yet see all these moments of great joy it's not usual joy it's unusual joy exceeding joy exceedingly great joy but the last mention of great joy is in jude and it's only possible because of the one who took the form of a baby in the manger and this great joy is yet to happen is that not encouraging is that not good news that whatever you face today not only were you made for joy but through jesus you are destined for great joy whatever is going on today your future holds great joy fear not i don't know what you think about god but there is something that perhaps we don't think too often maybe it's because of what we see in the world maybe it's because of what we feel often maybe it's because of what we've heard about god or what we've heard about the bible maybe it's because we're all too familiar of our own feelings but one of the things about god that we perhaps seldom think about is that there is no one more joyful than god no one in fact we have no idea just how joyful god is god is a joyful god think of the greatest joy that you have ever had multiply it by a million and you're not even close nowhere near how joyful god is there is no greater joy than the joy of god see you will know if you've been around a particularly joyful person how much it rubs off you might even find yourself laughing as they laugh not because you find the same thing funny but their laugh alone leads you in joy isn't that the case see because of what jesus has done those who believe will not only experience this joy but this joy everlasting see god is god isn't some angry grumpy headmaster he's not if god is angry he has a right to be angry angry that his good creation is being spoiled angry at darkness and sin and death stealing away light and purity and life god has a right to be angry not because he's an angry god but because he's a joyful god a good god that makes all things very good he doesn't intend this world to be full of grumbling he intends it to be full of joy see because of what jesus has done those who believe in jesus will not experience the anger of god but will definitely experience the joy of god isn't that incredible see god although he might be right to be angry at the things that have happened to this world and the

[20 : 21] things that have happened to me and you sin stealing away life as the wages of sin is death god is not powerless he's not powerless he's making all things new if he can make all of this out of nothing can he not make new me and you god is joyful beyond measure see the last mention of great joy in the bible is in jude and it's not happened yet and in fact here's the great thing it's not even really our joy it's not our joy it's the joy of god see this is what jude writes to him god to god who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to the only god our savior through jesus christ our lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time and now and forever with great joy it's a great joy of god to present me and you blameless before the presence of his glory a great joy god takes pleasure in making us new god takes great joy in me and you do you know that he not only welcomes you into his kingdom into his presence but he has great joy to clean us up and present us great joy god rejoices over us to make us new to give us joy it's that saying that john piper has isn't it god is most glorified when we are most satisfied in him god gets glory in our joy and he rejoices over us this is why the birth of jesus was so good this is why it was good news of great joy for all the people not because of what it is but because of where it leads that those who put their faith in jesus believing the testimony of god that jesus is indeed his son that they are forgiven and receive eternal life in his name that they would enter into joy everlasting see we who belonged to the darkness we who were sinful beyond measure enemies of god and destined for death can be rescued out of darkness brought into the light have our sin that was our death sentence removed and given eternal life with god the god of all joy and goodness all because of the son of god who took the form of this baby in bethlehem born to be the king of kings because of this child see this is what christmas is about the great joy at the birth of this child who would bring a great many people into his own great joy forever see and though there are still many things in this present age that make our joy fluctuate we must look to jesus knowing that whatever difficulties we may face he is our destination great joy we are destined for see as it says in hebrews 12 let us lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking to jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of god see and blessed be this god the father of our lord jesus christ because according to his great mercy he has

caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of jesus christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable undefiled and unfading kept in heaven for you who by god's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time in this you rejoice though now for a little while if necessary you have been grieved by various trials so that the tested genuineness of your faith may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of jesus christ see though you have not seen him you love him though you do not now see him you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory obtaining the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls great joy is coming great joy is coming because of jesus see chapter 2 in matthew and luke tell us that he came which resulted in great joy that was momentary but first peter tells us that he is coming again which will result in great joy everlasting for those who believe we are destined for great joy because we are going to christ jude tells us that god is able to keep us until then he is able to keep us until then and he will welcome us and present us before the presence of his glory with great joy of his own so therefore let us glorify him for he alone is worthy we're going to listen to a song in a video just now that reflects on the fact that christmas was about expecting the arrival of christ and what it means for us is the expectation of his coming again when we will experience great joy everlasting so let us be encouraged by this song is the great joy that comes at the arrival of christ and not just that as a child or as a man but he has been raised from the dead never to die again taking us into a new humanity into his own kingdom see the great joy that came with the arrival of christ shows us that when he says he is going to come he will come and he did come and he is coming again and we can trust that and if you do not know this joy or this savior then believe in jesus christ for he is the son of god forgiveness is in his name eternal life is in his name we can become the children of god by believing in jesus and he will welcome us into his kingdom whatever we face right now there is great joy ahead of us because he is coming again beloved brothers and sisters if your joy is waning and keep believing keep enduring build yourself up in your most holy faith and pray in the holy spirit keep yourselves in the love of god waiting for the mercy of our lord jesus christ that leads to eternal life and now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy to the only god our savior through jesus christ our lord be glory majesty dominion and authority before all time and now and forever amen amen