

John Ch15v9-11 - That Your Joy May Be Complete

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[0:00] As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

Let's pray. Our Father, we come to your good word this morning and we want to hear what you would say to us, not what we would think or even necessarily the words of a preacher, but we want to hear what you would say through your scriptures this morning to us by your Spirit.

And I do pray, Lord, that the words that I speak would be your words this morning to your people for our joy together. Amen. There are really some universal childhood experiences.

Finding out that fires are hot, that nettle sting, and electric fences give you jumps. And that last one is courtesy of my older brother, Paul, by the way.

[1:26] There's another one, another classic, and it's finding out what happens when you let go of a helium balloon. Another universal childhood experience.

Picture little Kenny. Little Kenny's on his holidays, summertime, he's at the theme park, and he sees these beautiful foil balloons.

And Mom and Dad, they normally wouldn't waste money on such things, but you know what? They say, go on, Kenny, get the Mickey Mouse one. And Kenny is enjoying his Mickey Mouse helium-filled foil balloon for all of two minutes because Kenny starts to ponder, what all five-year-olds in that situation begin to ponder, what happens if I let go?

Wah! Joy turns to tears and wails as Kenny is now loudly contemplating his most recent life choice to let go of the balloon.

The equation, Kenny, was rather simple. Balloon and holding the string equals joy.

[2:40] That's it. Very simple. Now, balloon joy is temporary. The verses before us, they speak of a much greater joy.

A complete joy. A joy that comes about even if you're not holding a balloon. Now, this joy is the joy of Jesus. The joy of Jesus that comes from him to us and pulses through our lives.

It is a complete joy. And the equation for this joy, well, it's slightly more complicated than blue joy, and I've tried to summarize this, and I realize there are limits to how much students this morning want to think about maths on a Sunday during the school holidays, but here it goes.

Here's the summary of these verses, the equation for joy. Remaining in love and remaining with obedience equals joy.

Remaining in love and remaining with obedience equals joy. The beat of verse 9 is love and the beat of verse 10 is obedience.

[4:02] They are both part of that equation of joy. But we instinctively push against trying to put love and obedience together.

I love my friends. I have to do what my teachers tell me. I love my husband. I have to take orders from my boss.

Obedience and commands are not the usual currency of our love-based relationships, are they? It's why a verse like verse 14 can feel a little bit like a speed bump when we read it.

You are my friends if you do what I command. Friends aren't slaves, Jesus. This might be how we want to respond to verse 14.

And because of that, we all keep some kind of line, don't we, between notions of love on one hand and notions of obedience in our lives.

[5:05] And it's understandable we want to keep some kind of line between them because we've seen bad authority where people have abused instead of cared.

And some of us have experienced that firsthand. And so the line between love and obedience is very, very thick. It can be a mile-wide line.

We keep love on this side and obeying authority on this far side. But here, in these verses, 9 to 11, Jesus is moving seamlessly between love and obedience.

Free movement for Jesus between the two. Now we struggle, as Christians, with the commands of Jesus. Like the command in verse 12, my command is this, love each other as I have loved you. And we struggle because we know that we fail or we can feel overwhelmed by all that we should be doing as a Christian, even today or this week or in our lives.

[6:19] And also, for those that aren't Christians, that aren't following Jesus, these demands of obedience, well, they just appear ripe for making us kind of slaves and weak and open to manipulation.

It's not what Christianity is. It's kind of servile and slavish for the weak. And so, we might be interested in Christianity. We might be interested in Jesus as Savior.

But Jesus is Lord. Kind of take it or leave it. So as we come to these verses this morning, we all have to come with open ears to hear what God would say and open hearts to respond.

We're going to spend most of our time in verses 9 and 10. and we're going to see two things. That love and obedience go together and that it all starts from the love between a father and a son.

Verse 9. To properly hold love and obedience, we have to begin in verse 9 and even just the first words of verse 9.

[7:28] As the father has loved me. As the father has loved me, Jesus says.

Those are six words that begin everything. Six words that unlock everything. God's love for the world. John 3.16.

God so loved the world that he sent his only son begins in the love of the father for his son. God's love for sinners, for rebels, for you and for me begins here in the love of the father for the son.

Creation. God's plan of salvation. Jesus coming and dying on the cross. The church. God's beautiful eternal bride to give to his son.

The origin story for everything that happens in our lives flows out of the love for the father to his son and for his son.

[8:40] Verse 9. As the father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.

There's a life giving flow, an eternal flow from the father through the son to us. The love of the father and the love of the son are ours through Jesus.

So what is? You can read those words that father has loved me, but what is the love, the particular love that God the father has for the son?

Well I'm a father like many of you here this morning and all of us are either sons or daughters and we've all been shaped by the presence or maybe the absence of a father in our lives.

So a father and a son relationship is one that we can all relate to in many ways. 9.30 a.m. two weeks ago my 15 year old son Noah comes into our home office.

[9:52] I work remotely from home usually at the desk by 9 o'clock. I quickly find out that this day was now bike day. That famous day that is at the start of the summer maybe you know it where the bike needs to emerge out of the shed from its long winter hibernation free to cycle again.

Now I'm not the best when I'm caught on the hop and by that and I'm saying this really isn't news to a lot of you I don't context switch very well when I'm already locked into something.

Interrupting me at the wrong point can lead to me being more than a little confused by anything you might now try to say to me. Bike day just wasn't in my head space but I'm a father Noah's my son so the office work gets paused and we head off to the shed you know the drill empty the shed drag the bike out look at the bike look at the flat tires locate pump locate right connector for the pump see that the chain needs to be oiled pump the tires get the tools sun has grown allen keys adjust handlebars adjust saddle check screw down do one test cycle around before giving it to sun encourage helmet use well finally take delight in the sun cycling off to Crossaven that morning why do I share that story well working together is one of the ways we can visibly see the love of a father and a son imperfect as it was

Noah dropping the news at 9.30am on a work day dad having to contact switch the missing tools do you know what there's still a real love and a joy in working together that's on display we can enjoy what each other brings the father knowing and directing the bike rescue the son repairing and going you see God's delight God's joy the very thing that makes God an eternally happy God is this that

he is the father to a son he is a father to a son it is the deep pleasure of the father to love the son and to enjoy the son and do all things through the son and the son well the son enjoys and remains in the love of the father as he reflects the father and as he follows the father

I love my children each one of them is a joy and a delight and it brings me true happiness I take pleasure in them and all that they do that is good and right now I can command them I can command Noah and each of my children even those that are over 18 because you're still at home and I'm a goodish father by God's strength and they are goodish children also by God's strength but we're not always aligned we can talk past each other we can make conflicting plans we can have different ideas about how to go about something now I should be able to call on their youthful strength and energy to get things done they should be able to rely on me for direction and guidance that's them being a child and me being a father but the timing and the practicalities of all that well it can be a bit like bike day can't it we misalign we start to focus on our own needs and we begin to maybe frustrate each other but imagine a perfect father and imagine a perfect son where the son is the exact image of the father like father like son and when this father and son act they always act as one because they share one will and intuitively know exactly how to work together for good they never disagree they never argue the father acts like the father and the son acts like the son and the father he delights to initiate and the son delights to carry out imagine a perfect father and a perfect son our father

[15:01] Jesus the son short word of application imperfect fathers and imperfect mothers be patient and kind to your sons and daughters do not exasperate them or annoy them it's easily done and it leaves a mark the wrong kind of mark your children do bear your image not just the way you walk and that inherited baldness that's approaching but they bear on their lives the marks of how you act and how you treat them parents be kind be patient do not be harsh forgive and ask for forgiveness my family will know that I preach these words to my own heart this morning imperfect children love and obey your parents there are exceptions and hard cases

I don't speak of those now but generally your parents love you and it is right for you to obey them part of the love they show like God the Father shows to the Son includes that they take the initiative that they set goals that they give direction listen to them honour them and obey them verse 10 if you keep my commands you will remain in my love just as I have kept my father's commands and remain in his love Jesus remains in love and Jesus obeys Jesus remains in the love of his father and Jesus also obeys we've looked at the love of the father to the son but we must now spend time and ask what does it mean that Jesus

God the son eternal obeys the father's commands well the eternal son has always been in the father's love he's always been in that love and everything everything that the father does flows through the son the son does nothing apart from the father and the father does nothing without the son it's it's an incredible relationship the father works all of his actions through the son go back to John chapter 5 verses 19 and 20 it's on page 1068 for using the church bible John chapter 5 19 and 20 Jesus has already spoken of this speaking to the Jewish leaders who are criticizing him for doing things on the sabbath and this is what the answer that Jesus gave in verse 19 very truly

I tell you the son can do nothing by himself he can do only what he sees his father doing because whatever the father does the son also does for the father loves the son and shows him all that he does yes and he will show him even greater works than these so that you will be amazed you see that the father shows the son everything and the father involves the son and everything we can think of creation in the beginning was the word and the word was with God that's Jesus is the word the word was with God Jesus was with God and Jesus was God the word was God he was with God in the beginning and it says through him that is through Jesus all things were made without him nothing was made that has been made who created the universe

God God the father that's true and he made all things through the word that is Jesus everything God the father did nothing made nothing without doing so through Jesus they always act together as one and after the creation Jesus enters in he enters into that very creation and so the eternal word the eternal son he was always the son became flesh it says the word became flesh Jesus took on to himself a full humanity just like us and so Jesus becomes a son twice over he's always been God the son eternal and now he's the son in the flesh as a human incarnate is the word that we sometimes used and so now he is the human son and now the son can obey the father in new ways as a human son of a heavenly father new ways to show love and obedience that they perfectly go together

[20:42] Jesus obeyed his heavenly father every time he obeyed Mary and Joseph Jesus obeyed his heavenly father when as a 12 year old he went to the temple to discuss issues of the law and the scriptures with the leaders the heavenly father sent Jesus into a wilderness by the spirit to be tested for 40 days and 40 nights and Jesus at the end of that chose to obey his father's words rather than listen to the words of Satan the faithful son passed the test remember Adam and Eve back in the garden they listened to Satan they failed they didn't listen to their father's word they listened to Satan's word on their own heart Jesus succeeded by his obedience by listening to his father all the earthly obedience of Jesus flowed out of a life of love from the father a love that went from the father through the son and to us and so

Jesus obeys he serves he gives of himself out of love can we see that there's not one millimeter of a gap between the love of Jesus and the obedience of Jesus not one millimeter of a gap where we would put a mile between them there is no gap for Jesus for Jesus to disobey think about this for Jesus to disobey for even a millisecond would have been to rupture the love between the father and the son it's incomprehensible to think of the son disobeying the father the son always remains in the father in his love with his obedience there is no rupture there's no difficulty here no intrinsic difficulty between how love and obedience relate the son shows us that he loves the father and that he remains in the father and that they are one friends where do we see love and obedience most clearly and fully where is it where love and obedience equals joy is it not the cross of our lord and savior where Jesus says these words father if you are willing take this cup of punishment from me yet not my will but yours be done

Jesus humbled himself and showed obedience even obedience to death on a cross Hebrews chapter 12 verse 2 says this to us this morning fix our eyes on Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith for the joy set before him he endured the cross scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God oh what manner of love the father has lavished on us that we should be called the sons of God for that's what we are and this is an invitation to you this morning if you are not a christian your sins are against god he loves you and he sent his son to die for you in your place so that your sins may be forgiven so that you would know this complete joy of love and obedience that we're talking about this morning if you're not a christian come to jesus confess your sins and put your trust and your obedience into him through jesus you can become one of his sons or one of his daughters a son or daughter of god finally verse 11 i have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete i'm not sure what your childhood experiences were i hope they were more than nettle stings and electric fence jumps really i hope i hope you had some nice things in there i hope it included at least one opportunity to have a helium filled foil balloon if not look for one on your next birthday you know kenny he may have gotten another balloon that day maybe his parents relented and doubled down on the wasting money on foil balloons thing at the theme park but even if he did even if kenny got the balloon and he got the string and he wrapped it a few times around his arm this time and he held on tight all day and he went to bed that night held on tight all night and into the next day do you know what the balloon wouldn't have brought kenny complete joy the helium it would have finally leaked out or more likely kenny would have grown bored of the balloon and moved on to the next thing you see the things in this life that we enjoy are often good but they are always fleeting things break they get stolen they get lost they fly away they go out of fashion they can't be afforded that's just the things people hurt us and we hurt them jobs schools friends politicians youth groups there's a million ways and a million things that can evaporate along with the joy that we put into them into this life your life this is what

Jesus says i've told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete Jesus says here is my joy have my joy i am loved by my father and i remain in him and obey him because we do all things together and i have this everlasting joy in my father because he loves me here you go my joy that i experience can be in you why because Jesus says this i love you he says remain in me obey as i obey have my joy and so

Jesus wraps himself around us and Jesus grafts us into himself like a branch into a vine and Jesus brings us into his family as his friends as sons of the father and Jesus will never let go the helium won't leak out will never grow bored of Jesus true joy complete joy founded on the love of a father for a son remain in Jesus be like Jesus love and obey and know complete joy let's pray oh what manner of love that we should be called the sons of

[29 : 52] God and that's what we are we are blown away by your love God for your son and your love to us through your son a love that rescues that calls that keeps that nourishes that causes us to flourish and know complete joy thank you father for showing us the love that you have for your son and sharing that joy with us help us Lord it's hard we've only scratched the surface help us Lord that we we would learn to love you to remain in you to obey to understand the goodness of your commands that they are light they are not burdensome and they are for your glory and for your good bless us Lord thank you again for the cross for rescuing us amen

Amen.