

# Joy is Knowing and Serving God

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[0:00] Make certain that you have a Bible so that you can bring one and feel like part of the group.! Anybody that spiritual here?

What? Oh, overachiever. All right. As we're taking a look today, we're talking about joy. And you choose how much joy you experience. Let me just start off by saying joy is not an emotion. Emotions are neither right or wrong. Emotions just come and go. Oftentimes, emotions are liars. You know, emotions depend upon, did you have a good breakfast? You might have a good day. Did your wife burn the toast again? You might have a bad day. Did you, you know, emotions are just, that's not joy.

[1:25] Joy is not an emotion. Joy is a state of delight and well-being that results from knowing and serving God.

Let me remember that one more time. Joy is a state of delight and well-being that results from knowing and serving God.

Joy is a state of delight and well-being that results from knowing and serving God. So that's not an emotion. You can, you can have a really bad day and still have joy. You can be in terrible circumstances and still have joy.

But, yeah. All right. So here we go. Let's, let's take a look at this. Luke 2.10. And the angel said to them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. In the middle of that, did anybody see the word gospel? Good news. Yeah, there you go. Okay. So I'm going to bring you good news. Good news.

[2:29] All that means is gospel. Gospel, all it means is good news. But this is good news of great joy that will be for all the people. And I want us to turn to Psalm 65.

And we're going to take a look at good news of great joy. So if you've got your Bible open to Psalm 65, feel free to read along with me. Praise is due you, O God in Zion.

And you, and to you, shall vows be performed. O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come. When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple. By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation.

[3:33] The hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas. The one who by his strength established the mountains being girded with might.

Who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples. So that those who dwell at the ends of the earth are in awe at your signs.

You make the going out of the morning and the evening to shout for joy. You visit the earth and water it. You greatly enrich it. The river of God is full of water.

You provide their grain, for so you have prepared it. You water its furs abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth.

You crown the year with your bounty. Your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. The pastures of the wilderness overflow. The hills gird themselves with joy.

[4:34] The meadows gloat themselves with flocks. The valleys deck themselves with grain. They shout and sing together for joy. I was in my rounds this week trying to find people in how they were doing.

A guy was telling me that he was so excited that the river was so high. Because he's an amateur prospector. And he says, this is going to stir up so much good stuff for me to find.

I was like, yeah, but that's going to go well with everybody. But, you know, that's the way it is. God has set it up so that these things happen. You know, when it says that he waters the earth well, I thought, well, that's appropriate for this week.

You know, a friend of mine had to dig a large hole because a horse passed away.

And he said he was down four feet before he got out of wet ground. And that's how much moisture we got. The Lord really did soften it up.

[5:41] But as I'm reading this, I... The pastor is not receiving a phone call in the middle of the sermon again.

Thank you, Flee. I silenced it. I could have ignored it, but I thought it was... As I was reading this this week, I was struck by Psalm 65. And I want to...

I want to actually start in the middle at verse 5. Take a look at verse 5. By awesome deeds, you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of earth and of the farthest seas.

And I want to talk about God's awesome deeds. His actions gain him the highest praise. Now, keep your finger here in Psalm 65.

We'll be back to that. But if you want, you can turn to 1 Corinthians chapter 15. I'm going to read the first five verses there. Very familiar passage. Paul is writing to the church at Corinth, and he says this.

[6:45] Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel, the good news. I preach to you which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preach to you, unless you've believed in vain.

By the way, is it possible to believe in God in vain? No. When we put our faith in God, when we turn to him, it is not in vain.

Does it mean that everything is going to go great? No. But does it mean that God is going to watch over us, and that he's got a plan for us, and he will save us, and he will work in our lives?

Yes. You cannot believe in God in vain. All right. Verse 3. God's awesome deeds summed up in a few short verses.

That according to the scriptures, Christ came, lived, died, and rose again. If you turn over to Philippians chapter 2, it puts it this way.

[8:13] Verse 6 through 8. Speaking of Christ. Christ, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, not reached for, but held on to.

Equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

When it says in Psalms 65, by awesome deeds, you answer us with righteousness, the awesome deeds of God, there's no greater thing than God himself taking on human form, living a sinless life, and voluntarily giving that life for us.

Incredible awesome deeds. Verse 9 through 11 in Philippians says this. Because of these awesome things that Christ has done, therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

His actions has gained him the highest of praise. Let's be honest. People today in the world, some of them don't think much of Jesus.

[9:54] But there is a day when that error will be rectified. My hope, our desire, why we are here, is that they would turn to Christ before they are forced to kneel.

But there is going to come a time when every man, woman, and child who has ever lived will stand before the Lord. They will acknowledge that he is great and glorious, and they will humble themselves kneeling before him because of his awesome deeds.

Those awesome deeds are... I mean, I like you guys, but I'm not certain that I would leave glory for you, hang out with you without ever making a mistake, and then dying on a cross when I could hang out in glory.

But he did that. He who knew no sin became sin for us. And why did he do this? So that he could answer our willful sin with perfect righteousness.

When it says here in Psalm 65, By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation. Look, Romans chapter 3.

[11:19] Again, I mean, pretty straightforward. Verse 21 is where I'm going to pick it up. It says this, Now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

For there is no distinction. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God and are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

God created us in the garden, right? God created humanity, and it was good. God created us in the garden, right? And Adam and Eve chose sin. And quite frankly, you and I do the same.

All people are sinful. And in his amazing love and mercy and grace, Christ, he answers our sin by offering us His righteousness.

Truly awesome. We could wrap it up right now. Luke 2, verse 10. The angels came and said, look, there's going to be good news for everybody, and this is the good news.

[12:51] God has left glory, and He is being born, and He's going to provide hope and salvation for all who would believe. And that's what we're talking about. Those are the awesome deeds.

That is the gospel. But I'm not very hungry yet, and I've got plenty more to say, so here we go. Back in Psalm 65, verse 5 is talking about the awesome deeds of God, but verses 1 through 4 talk about God's atonement.

Anybody really good at grammar or English or definitions? What does it mean?

What does it mean to atone? Anybody? Ooh, that's the second. That is the second definition, and that's absolutely the definition it's using here.

Do you know what the first definition is? What? No, no, no, no, no. That goes with making things right. To agree.

[14:01] I had no idea. I looked it up. Atone. To be in agreement? Like, that's not what I think of when I think of atonement. But that's, of course, that dictionary was written in 1947, so maybe it's wrong.

I don't know. But we're talking about to take care of our sin. Take a look at the first four verses in Psalm 65.

It starts off with, Okay. You who hear prayer, to you all flesh shall come.

When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Okay. Anybody notice anything there?

When iniquities prevail against who? Me. Me. Singular. Individual. What does it say? When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions.

[15:16] Interesting. I had an English teacher once who yelled at me because I didn't follow, you know, the proper number, you know, I, I, I throughout it. You know, I would change from the singular to the plural.

I wonder why it's changing from the singular to the plural. When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions.

I think it's speaking of the reality that each and every one of us are sinful. But God is willing, and not only willing, but has provided salvation for anyone and for all.

In fact, what does verse 4 say? Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts.

We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple. You see that singular versus plural going on there. God doesn't call all the right-handed people in the world.

[16:25] God doesn't call only the left-handed people in the world. God doesn't call the tall, the short. God calls individuals. I don't pay for your sins.

And you, you're not held accountable for my sins. It's us individually that stand before the Lord. But together, we join the family of God.

I think that's what it means. But let's look at this. God atones, that is, God takes care of, the sins of those He chooses.

Verse 4 said, Blessed is the one you choose and bring near to dwell in your courts. The idea here is that God is going to atone for the sins of those He chooses.

No man can come to the Father unless he is drawn by God. The act of salvation begins with God. Now, some people have abused this, and they've tried to draw lines, and some people are outside the line, some people are inside the line.

[17:41] But that's not the way it works. You see, God wants all people to be saved. This is good and right. God calls all people.

So, who has God chosen to redeem? Well, He's made the offer to everyone. He's put His hand out to anyone who would. But He only saves those who accept the gift.

You must choose God's salvation. Adashua 24, 15, Choose you this day whom you will serve. As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord, right? Ephesians 2, verse 8 describes salvation as a gift.

Can you take, you know, Is it right to go in and grab somebody's gift? No, you're supposed to receive it. They're supposed to give it to you.

You have to accept it if it is a gift. God takes care of the sin of all who turn to Him.

[18:45] And that's the heart of the good news. The good news is that we're sinners, But God has set up a plan of salvation By His incredible actions of leaving glory, Being born of a virgin, Living a sinless life, Dying a sacrificial death on a cross, Being buried and raised again.

He paid the penalty for our sins. And He makes that offer available to anyone. And the thing that's amazing, That He has the authority to do this.

You see, I'd like to, you know, I'd like to give you all a million dollars. There's a million for you, And a million for you, And you, And even you, And even you.

I'd love to do that. The only problem is, I don't have that much money, And therefore I can't do that.

Okay? I wish the government would figure that out, But we're getting there.

All right? But see, God has the authority to offer salvation, And not only to offer the salvation, But to affect salvation. He has the power, And the authority to do it.

[20:02] And the rest of chapter 65, Verifies, explains, Or illustrates God's authority, God's power. Verse 6, The one who by his strength Established the mountains And girded with might, Who stills the roaring of the seas And the roaring of the waves, The tumult of peoples.

By God's power, Creation happened. Nothing is today That was not created by God. That's real power.

That's real authority. He has dominion Over all, Because he spoke all into being. More than that, As we go through here, He not only created everything, He also established how things work.

And as you read through this, It details God's authority Over the way things work. He stills the roaring of the seas, He stills the tumult of the people, He has signs for those Around the globe.

He makes, I love this, You make the going out of the morning And the evening To shout for joy. Do you understand That we get to see sunrise, How often?

[21:26] Every morning, Right? How often do we get to see the sunset? Every morning. Well, Those of us that live up Chumstick, We don't really get to see the sunrise Or the sunset, Because we're in this canyon, And oh look, There's a pretty cloud.

You know, But I've been out in the Midwest, Right? They have glorious sunrises And sunsets.

Right? I've been camping up on the top Of the mountain, You know, And you see the most awesome sunrises Over the peaks, And do you know that sunrise and sunset Is constantly happening on the globe?

God is in a constant motion Of this glorious sunrise, And He's following it up Every moment With this spectacular sunset.

It's going on all the time. And look at it, You make the going out of the morning And the evening shout for joy. It's like God is going around the globe All the time.

Lightning, Making people sit there and go, Ooh, Aw. Couples to hold hands. It's glorious. All right.

[22:42] He established how things. And the blessings of God Are bountiful. It wraps up The rest of this passage with, You know, You water its furrows abundantly, Settling its ridges, Softening it with showers, The blessing its growth.

You crown the year with bounty. Your wagon tracks overflow with abundance. The idea there Is that the harvest is being brought in. And the workers in the field Have brought their bushels Or their bags or whatever Or their bins of apples.

Even for those that are really backwards, Pears. They've brought in their bounty From the fields, right? And as the wagon is going Into the barn, Into the storage shed, There's so much abundance on it That it's just falling off.

And so the wagon tracks Are filled with the abundance Because they just don't have enough To contain it. The blessings of God Are bountiful. This has been a really bad week.

Can I get an amen? We've had flood. We've had trees falling down. I was waiting for fire and famine. And we had the famine.

[24:03] If you, Dan's and Safeway, They threw out a bunch of food Because the refrigeration, You know, Went and the food went bad, Right? So we had flood, Famine, We didn't have fire.

Well, We had that earlier this year, You know. But God's blessings are good. In the midst of it, We can stop and we can say, Praise the Lord.

Do you know why? Because this life is temporary. This existence that we have, Though it seems like it goes on forever, Is very, Very short.

But the salvation and the hope That God offers Is glorious and eternal. I want to, I want to kind of go to Romans chapter 4 Real quick. Because I, I just, I want to, I want to emphasize this.

Which then, Shall we say, Was gained by Abraham, Our forefather, According to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, He has something to boast about, But not before God. Paul's talking about the salvation That is offered.

[25:16] The bounty. Christ came and he performed Amazing deeds. He, He provided salvation So that he could atone For our sins. And, And, And Paul's making this parallel Between the righteousness That Abraham, And, And our salvation.

And he says this, Did Abraham earn his salvation? The answer is no. If you read through the story of Abraham, The man was a liar at times.

The man was not always honorable In what he did. He wasn't perfect. He didn't earn it. For does, For what does the scripture say?

Abraham believed God. And it was counted to him as righteousness. It was Abraham's belief, Not doing all of the right things. Not always being in the right place.

Not always getting it right. But believing. Abraham believed God, And it was counted to him as righteousness. Now to the one who works, His wages are not counted as a gift, But as is due.

[26:22] And to the one who does not work, But believes in him, Who justifies the ungodly, His faith is counted as righteousness. Look, God came and did all of the things That needed to be done.

In verse 5, It's called, The awesome works of God. He did the awesome works. God says that he will redeem those Who turn to him.

He will atone for their sins. He will make it right. And that if you do turn to him, It is a bountiful blessing. Not always every day on our walk on this earth Is it always fun.

But the blessings of God go beyond this life. It comes down to this.

Do we walk by faith? See, I started off saying That you can choose how much joy you experience. I wasn't talking about how much happiness.

[27:29] I wasn't talking about how much glee. I wasn't talking about yay. I was talking about joy. Joy.

We define joy as a state of delight And well-being which results from knowing And serving God. Do you realize That you can be the worst human being On the earth and receive salvation?

Hello? Do you realize that even as a pastor That you can make mistakes And God still is going to redeem And atone you?

Do you realize that you can be you before God? And be saved. And be saved. As I'm thinking about this I really, really don't know A lot of joyful happiness right now.

There's a lot of things that are weighing on my heart. There's a lot of things that I I go home at night And I look at my wife and I say It's not her fault. It's just the way things are right now.

[28:41] But do you know that I can have peace? Do you know that I can have rest? Do you know that I go home And even as frustrated as I am I can look at her and I can say It's not resting on me.

He has performed the awesome works. He has done it all. I am secure. And so I can have joy Knowing that No matter how many times I slip and fall No matter how much I struggle No matter how much I fall short God loves me.

And He has forgiven me. And He has promised me a hope. And I can have joy. Not exuberant. Yay! But this calm assurance Of God's love and affection And that He who began that good work Is going to carry it through.

See I'm not earning my way into salvation. Jesus Christ paved the path. That's our message. You know I'm willing to bet Your life isn't perfect either.

How did He know? I'm willing to bet That there are days where you go home And you look in the mirror And you go And I bet there's days where you go home With your head Hanging low Because You blew it.

[30:29] I bet there's times where you're like I hope nobody knows this. How do you experience joy in those moments? Do you experience joy the same way I do?

The same way anybody does. We take our eyes off of us And we put them on God. You see We lack joy when we look at our circumstances And our mistakes And our shortcomings. We experience joy when we say You did awesome things for me. Do you see the difference? I am a bum And you love me enough To do those awesome things?

How can that be? All glory to you. It takes our eyes off of us And puts them on our glorious Father And the amazing things that Jesus did And it changes the perspective.

Instead of me walking around Moping because I am a bum I walk around going Do you know He loves even people like me? That's joy. That's what we're talking about.

[31:40] And that's what we go out And we communicate to others. Not that we are great Christian people Which by the way you are. You're just wonderful. I love you all. Okay most of you all.

Okay a few of you. No! You guys love the Lord right? You're not perfect. And God loves you. Just as He loves people out there.

I hope that this week You had an opportunity To go out and share the love of Christ With people. Help them pick up their yard. Help them take care of whatever's going on.

At least call in on them And let them know That you care about them. That's what we're all about people. Sharing that.

And as we share that We can share the love of God And we can see a little bit more joy. Alright. I know. Joy is not a fickle emotion.

[32:39] It is the result Of resting and meditating On the completed work of God. Amen? Let's pray. Father, I know.