

How Christ Fulfills His Joy In You

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[0 : 00] John chapter 17, starting at verse 11. Our Lord Jesus prays to his Father, and now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are one.

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name. Those whom thou gavest to me, I have kept, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. Verse 14, I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of this world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth. Thy word is truth. As thou has sent me into the world, even so I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes, I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

You may be seated. The Bible says that the grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever. Let's pray.

Father, we acknowledge even right now there's a battle over our minds and our souls. Lord, the enemy does not want your people to hear your word. We confess, Lord, we're so easily gripped by our own fear and our own flesh. We confess that we are weak.

[2 : 29] We are in the courts of our king, but yet we feel sad and disappointed in other ways. Our hearts long for a true, eternal, soul-filling joy.

So we ask, like the hymn says, from our fears and sins release us. Let us find our rest in thee. You are our strength and consolation. Hope of all the world thou art. Dear desire of every nation. Joy of every longing heart.

May your word fill us, Lord. May your people today hear from you, O God, through the words of Jesus Christ, God the Son, who took on flesh and who sanctified himself, that we would be sanctified in his truth.

We ask this in his name and for his sake alone. Amen. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, my prayer for you this week, my hope for today is that you can see in the words of Jesus how he fulfills his joy in you.

[3 : 46] How our Lord Jesus Christ fulfills his joy in you. This is true every week, but especially today, I come to you as a poor, tired pilgrim, not from a position of strength or mastery.

I'm preaching this to myself, to my own soul. I just need you to know that right away. So if you and I expect this world to fill us with joy, we will be disappointed.

If you and I expect this world to fill us with joy, we will be disappointed. This is the time of the year where smiles are everywhere, at least in the marketing.

And any marketer worth his salt knows that you try to sell the hope of joy with smiles. Listen to these familiar songs of silver bells.

City sidewalks, busy sidewalks, dressed in holiday style. In the air, there's a feeling of something. Children laughing, people passing, meeting smile after smile.

[5 : 05] Listen to this. As shoppers rush home with their treasures. Hear the snow crunch, see the kids bunch. This is Santa's big scene.

It's true, isn't it? Psychologists did a study, and those who already have depression report that in this season of silver bells, depression gets worse.

64 people with depression report that depression gets worse. If we expect the world to fill us with joy, we will be disappointed.

Now, put your eyes on our scripture text. Look at what Jesus says in verse 13. Really, this one verse is the whole sermon. Jesus, he has already said, I am not in this world. I'm with the Father. He's already there spiritually. He's already accomplished. It's finished. And in verse 13, he says, I am coming to you, Father. Now, notice, he says what he says next for your sake.

[6 : 13] He says, these things I speak in the world. Why? That they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Jesus is praying to the Father while he's still in the world so that John and his disciples can be within earshot. He is praying so that we can know how the Son prays. And that his joy of being at the right hand of the Father, ruling over all, that his joy would be fulfilled in them. I believe in these verses we see five ways or so of how, just how our Lord Jesus Christ fulfills his joy in his disciples.

The world wants to try to promise joy coming at you from the outside. If you dress this way, if you're in a certain atmosphere, if you buy certain things, it's all coming at you from the outside.

Jesus says, no, I'm going to fulfill my joy inside of you. What is the joy of the Lord? The joy of our Lord Jesus Christ is inner gladness, delight, rejoicing, a genuine happiness that is based on spiritual realities.

[7 : 41] What's the first way? Number one is this. In this isolated world, Christ fulfills his joy in you, dear believer, as you experience oneness with his people.

In this isolated world, Christ fulfills his joy in you as you experience oneness with his people. That's what he says in verse 11.

Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. The same apostle John gets a vision of heaven, and he writes that letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor.

Notice the words in Revelation 2, 3, to the church in Ephesus. He commends them. This is our Lord Jesus Christ through the pen of John, the same disciple.

He commends the church for enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake and not growing weary. Well, there's the vision of this promise, this prayer of Christ being fulfilled in the church.

[8 : 57] They've gathered in his name. They've gathered as Christians, as a body. And they are standing together as one in Christ. They are enduring and bearing up.

And he's able to report years later, decades later, the church has not grown weary. Christ has sustained them through the persecution. He is fulfilling his joy in them as they band together and hold together in the name of Jesus as one.

If you're a Christian, this is true for you too. You do not grow weary when you bear together in this world as one with Christ's church by gathering in his name.

And as we do that, the spirit that dwells in each believer, it's concentrated when his people come together. So we just saw in Sunday school how he multiplies the fruit of the spirit.

It's multiplied when God's people are coming together. And that same spirit starts to work that out in each life together. Being one as a father and son are one.

[10 : 01] See, this truth made that list of the fruits of the spirit hit me in a new way this week. Listen to this. Galatians 5.22 The fruit of the spirit is...

Now, listen to the list, but think about which of these are internal and then which of these just work themselves out. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

You see how it starts by the inside. The spirit fills you on the inside with Christ's love. He fills you with Christ's joy. He fills you with Christ's patience.

It's still internal, but it's relating to other people. That's the joy of Christ in heaven being fulfilled in his people on earth. So if you're full of the love, the joy, the peace, and the patience of Jesus, you almost don't need to list anything else.

It's all going to overflow, isn't it? So dear Christian, don't expect this world to fill you with joy.

According to John 13 and John 16, Satan is the prince of this world.

[11 : 13] Instead, ask the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the prince of peace, to fill you with his joy.

Don't expect the world to fill you with joy. 1 Corinthians 1.20 calls the wisdom of this world ignorant foolishness.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, he is the wisdom of God. He is the one who will fulfill his joy in you. What is it? What is this joy? The joy of our Lord Jesus Christ is a part of God's very essence.

God is joy. We have a notion of joy because that's who God is. His spirit manifests Christ's supernatural joy in you who are his children.

So yes, in this isolated world, Christ fulfills his joy in you, dear believer, as you experience oneness with his people.

Number two, in this violent world, if you belong to Christ, he fulfills his joy in you as you trust him to guard and keep you.

[12 : 25] Yes, even in this violent world, Christ fulfills his joy in you, dear believer, as you trust him to guard and keep you.

Look at what he says in verse 12. While I was with them, this is his disciples, I kept them in your name. I have guarded them. Not one of them has been lost.

Jesus says, it is accomplished. I finished the work you gave me to do. And the work of Jesus is the perfect obedience to the Father. And that includes him guarding and keeping his disciples.

Every single soul the Father gave to him. It is Christ who keeps you. Listen to how Paul echoes this truth to the church in Thessalonica.

2 Thessalonians 3.3. He writes, the Lord is faithful. He will establish you and guard you against the evil one.

[13 : 29] We sing in these beautiful Christmas hymns that he rules the world with truth and grace. He makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and the wonders of his love.

Jesus says, not one of those souls that the Father gave him were lost. Not one soul lost.

It's Christ who guards you. It's Christ who keeps you. Christ will not lose you. Don't expect this world, though, to fill you with joy.

1 Corinthians 11.32 tells us that this world is condemned. Our Lord Jesus Christ, he guards you and keeps you. And he says, you are no longer condemned with the world.

You belong to me. I'm the one who hold you. And I will fulfill my joy in you. What is this joy? The joy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[14 : 33] It is a deep-seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that he holds you. When you rest and trust that he holds me and keeps me and guards my soul, this ignites a cheerful, glad heart.

You're full of gratitude for the Lord who keeps you. So yes, in this violent world, Christ fulfills his joy in you, dear Christian, as you trust him to guard you and keep you.

Number three, in this world of lies, Christ fulfills his joy in you, dear Christian, as you receive God's word from Christ.

In this world of lies, Christ fulfills his joy in you as you receive his word from Christ. Jesus fulfills the word of God in two ways here in this passage.

First is in verse 12. Take your eyes to verse 12. Jesus is praying to the Father, knowing exactly how he will be handed over and tied up.

[15 : 43] And in verse 12, he says, The son of destruction was lost, that the scripture might be fulfilled. If you skip down a couple verses, in verse 14, Jesus says, I have given them my disciples who I guard and keep.

I've given them your word. Now, Judas is described in the book of Matthew as turning.

Let me read it for you. In Matthew chapter 27, Judas says in the temple, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.

And he throws the money back at the rulers, the religious elite of the world. But the term that Matthew uses, it does not define true repentance and change of direction.

It's only really meaning a changing of the mind. That's how the ESB correctly translates it. Judas changed his mind, but as someone put it, he merely felt regret and sorrow.

[16 : 52] There was not a genuine conversion. Judas did not experience spiritual penitence, but only emotional remorse. Judas was so trapped in sin that he was willing to be an instrument of Satan.

We're told in Luke 22, 3, that Satan entered Judas, who was called Iscariot. So you see, this is really an expression of the great cosmic battle. It's the promised seed of Eve, Jesus Christ, against the serpent.

And Judas has taken the side of the serpent. And Jesus comes to fulfill all scripture. That the serpent will, in fact, injure him. And to the point of death, Jesus will fulfill the scripture by laying down his life and becoming accursed.

So Judas made his choice. He chose this world. And he experienced the lies of Satan.

In this world of lies, the worldly leaders said to Judas, after he had thrown the money back at them, what is this to us? See to it yourself. You see, even with the example of Judas, the contrast is so stark.

[18:07] You put your trust in Christ, he will satisfy you. He will not disappoint you. You put your trust in the world, this world is full of lies. You will be disappointed. Trust is the lifeblood of any relationship.

So a lie is like a cut. And the relationship starts to hemorrhage trust. You can trust Jesus.

Jesus says, I give my disciples your word. He comes as the great prophet. He comes to speak the truth of God.

In the word of Jesus, you can trust. Listen to how the church in Sardis held on to the word of Christ. In Revelation 3.8, Jesus says to the church, I know that you have little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Jesus keeps you, and he gives you his word, and you keep his word. This world of lies, it can feel like we are.

[19:17] crawling through barbed wire and thorns. I mean, it's a vicious world that Christ has left us in. I love how the hymn shows the work of Christ.

No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground. He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.

And as the word of God goes out through his church, through his people, the power of the Spirit draws all who belong to him. They hear the shepherd's voice and follow him. And he keeps them, and they keep his word.

And by doing that, he fulfills his joy in his people. So don't expect this world to fill you with joy. 1 Corinthians 7.31 says that the fashion of this world will pass away.

But our Lord Jesus Christ, his throne is forever, and he will fulfill his joy in you. Don't expect this world to fill you with joy.

[20:22] In John 14.27, we saw that this world does not receive the Spirit of God. But our Lord Jesus Christ fills you with his Spirit. And his Spirit brings the joy of Christ in heaven and fulfills it in your life.

What is that joy of Christ? It is the deep down sense of well-being that abides in you when you know that all is well between you and your Lord because of Christ's finished work for you.

How can you trust that? Because he promises it in his word. So yes, in this world of lies, Christ fulfills his joy in you, dear believer, as you receive God's word from Christ.

Hold on to it. Number four. In this world of rejection, Christ fulfills his joy in you as you learn that you belong to Christ, not to the world.

We hear this promise, we receive it by faith, but we need to learn it. In this world of rejection, Christ fulfills his joy in you as you learn and I learn that we belong to Christ.

[21:42] Body and soul, both in life and in death. We don't belong to this world. This world is not one you want to belong to.

Listen to this disturbing description of our country. Blood grows hot and blood is spilled. Deception breeds and thrives.

Universal suspicion reigns. Each man feels an impulse to kill his neighbor, lest he first be killed by him. Revenge and retaliation follow.

Does that sound like our country? Sound like human nature? That was written in 1863 by President Abraham Lincoln. Don't put your hope in this world.

Look at what Jesus says in verse 14. The world has hated them because they are not of this world, just as I am not of this world.

[22:48] Jesus has been saying this. The world hated me first. If you belong to me, the world will hate you.

The world hates you because you have my word. As the church holds on to the word of God, the world hates the Christian even more and more and more.

It's easy to want to cower and back down, maybe let go of some parts of the word of God. It's easy to want to try to keep one foot in each camp. You want to be across the borderline of these two kingdoms with one foot on each side.

Jesus says, if you belong to me, you don't belong in this world. You are either under Adam's curse in the world or you are under the blessings of Christ in the eternal kingdom of heaven.

The good news is that we don't do this alone. He's speaking of his disciples. The world hates all of my disciples and none of my disciples are of the world because all of my disciples are united to me, Christ says, and I am not of this world.

[24 : 02] We see this promise in Romans 7 verse 4. You belong to another, to him who is raised from the dead in order that we might bear the fruit of God.

In verse 15, Jesus says, I do not ask God that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. In verse 16, they are not of the world just as I am not of the world.

The world is vicious, but yet Jesus says it's good for you and me, his people, to remain in the world. Look at what he says in verse 15. I do not ask that you take them out of the world.

God wants you who belong to Christ to remain in the world, and Jesus is praying right now from heaven that the Father will protect you, protect your soul from the evil one as you remain here.

He keeps you by the power of his spirit. The Lord Jesus knows the war for your soul. It's vicious. The enemy is coming at you. The world hates you, and yet he prays for you.

[25 : 11] The evil one will try to deceive Christ's disciples into thinking that they are of this world. Jesus says, you belong to me.

I am not of this world. Don't expect this world to fill you with joy. In John 8, verse 23, Jesus says, I do not belong to this world.

Neither do you if you belong to me. Instead, our Lord Jesus Christ, he opens the floodgates of the blessings of heaven, and he does that in order to fill you with his joy.

James 5, 6 says that it was the world that slew Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ, he endured the cross. He was made to bleed. He was publicly shamed. He took on the curses of this world and the judgment of God for those souls who were in this world in order to confirm, you belong to me.

[26 : 22] I have purchased you with my blood, and I will fulfill my joy in you. What is this joy of our Lord who gave up his life on the cross, was buried, and rose again?

The joy of the Lord is not an experience that comes from favorable circumstances. It's the opposite. It is a gift of heaven to your soul through the most difficult trials that this world can pile on.

Number five, in this sinful world, Christ fulfills his joy in you, dear believer, as God sanctifies you by his truth.

Yes, in this sinful world, Christ fulfills his joy in you as God sanctifies you in truth. See what Jesus prays in the final verses, 17, 18, and 19.

It says, Father, sanctify in the truth, my disciples. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world.

[27 : 39] And for their sake, I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. Jesus says, for their sake, I sanctify or consecrate myself.

It means to be set apart, to be marked, to be cut and made holy. The cross of Jesus, it's referred to by Paul as the circumcision.

This is Christ being cut, being sanctified, being set apart. And Jesus, in this prayer, says, I consecrate myself for their sake, for the sake of my disciples.

And he does this so that you will be sanctified in his truth. How does this happen? How does God sanctify his disciples in his truth?

Well, what I want to emphasize from today in these verses, it's the truth that Christ was sanctified for you.

[28 : 51] So your sanctification begins by resting in that truth. I love how one Scottish pastor in the 1800s, Horatius Bonar, he wrote this, faith is rest, not toil.

It is the giving up of all the former weary efforts to do or feel something good in order to make God love and pardon you. Faith is the calm reception of the truth that God loves you and pardons your sin of his goodness.

Rest upon God's free love. He so loved you in the world that he gave his only begotten son. Rest in the joy of who Christ is.

He is the son of God consecrated for you. And as we rest in this truth, we find out the greatness of God's love to you in Christ.

That's what we focus on in Christmas in this season. God the son took on flesh, consecrated himself, he fulfilled, he accomplished all the work his father gave him to do to show you the love of the father for you.

[30 : 19] In verse 18, Jesus says, Father, you sent me into the world. The Lord Jesus was sent on a mission into this world and it was to minister to you.

Ultimately, it was to fulfill his joy in you for the glory of God. And now, Jesus says of his disciples, so I have sent them into the world.

God doesn't take us out of the world, he keeps us in the world, and as the father sent him, he sends his disciples. Alistair Begg pointed out, we cannot minister to a lost world unless we are in it.

And yet, we're in the world, not because we belong to the world, but we're in it as a sojourner, as a pilgrim. We are in the world, but we are not of the world. In 3 John 1-4, sorry, chapter 1, verse 4, we read, I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.

We receive the truth, and we walk it out as pilgrims and sojourners in this world. Jesus was sent by God, and he was sustained by the power of the Holy Spirit, and it's that same Holy Spirit who sustained Christ, who now is sending and sustaining his disciples, his people, as we march out his mission on the earth.

[31 : 56] He accomplishes it. We are his hands and feet marching it out. And we do this before the face of God himself, before the Lord Jesus who looks down on his church with pleasure.

This is the great high priestly prayer. It's a glimpse into how Jesus prays from heaven, and it reminds us of the Numbers 16 blessing that we say, the Lord bless you and keep you. All of those themes are here in these verses.

I love how the hymn makes that connection. We ask our Lord Jesus on this mission as pilgrims in the world, Lord, ever lift thy face upon me.

Resting neath thy smile, Lord Jesus, earth's dark shadows flee. So we do not expect this world to fill us with joy.

Galatians 6.14 says that the world is crucified to you, and you are crucified to the world. In John 7, Jesus said that the proud of this world hate Christ.

[33 : 06] Why would the proud of this world be able to fulfill us with the joy that only God can give? By contrast, our Lord Jesus Christ humbly entered this proud world, and he did that to fulfill his joy in you, his people.

Do you see how the joy of Christ is independent of what is happening around us in the world? The joy of Christ is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behavior.

in this sinful world, our Lord Jesus sanctifies his people by his truth as we walk with him.

Well, the only way that we can respond to this glorious truth of how Christ fulfills his joy in us is to rejoice. Rejoice because Christ has accomplished his mission in the world so that you can have his joy fulfilled in you.

I want to take you back once again to verse 13. Jesus said to the Father, I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

[34 : 21] If we expect this world to fill us with joy, we will be disappointed. But if we expect Christ to keep his promise and fulfill his joy in us, we will be satisfied.

George Swinnock, a Puritan, in a book called The Blessed and Boundless God, he wrote this, Those who have never seen the sun are amazed at a candle.

Likewise, those who have never known the blessed God are fond of pitiful things on earth. Our Lord Jesus Christ came revealing the radiance of the glory of God.

God. He reveals the joy of heaven. What is this joy? It's spiritual life. Psalm 16, as we read today, in verse 11, we read that it's in the presence of God that we find a fullness of joy at the right hand of God where Christ is seated, our pleasures forevermore.

Father, in verse 13, our Lord Jesus said, Father, I am coming to you. And now from the right hand of the Father, for he has ascended, the Son of God, he prays for you, Christian, who are in the world, and he prays that his Father will guard you and keep you and fill you with his joy.

[35 : 48] I had a phone call this week with a dear brother, a Christian who's been going through some of the hardest trials you could imagine for the last two or three years. And he was telling the story of not feeling this joy.

He said, it's just been so hard. And when he's feeling stirred up like that and the weight of life in this world and the sin and the brokenness, the disappointment, he just drives back to Scripture.

He's memorized the book of Romans from chapter 1 all the way through chapter 14. He's reciting Scripture constantly. He's memorized about 10 different Psalms that he's trying to recite to himself. And he said there was a week a little bit ago where he just went into work, took his lunch break, went to the grocery store, and just had to sit in his car and start to journal.

I wrote down some of what he was sharing. He said later on when he got home, he had seen that a call had gone to his phone and it was just a short little voice message of another Christian brother letting him know they were praying for him because God put him on their heart.

He said that that didn't instantly change how I was feeling, but it was a very small reminder. That fellow Christian was praying and took time to make a quick phone call because Jesus Christ is praying for him.

[37 : 34] Jesus Christ sees what he is enduring in this world. And Jesus Christ is praying, Father, keep my dear son. Guard him and fulfill my joy in him as he endures the pain of this world.

He's taking up his cross and fill him. And so when the Lord stirs you to pray for one another, I believe this is how the joy of Christ in heaven multiplies the blessings for his people on earth.

He doesn't take us out of the world, but he prays that the spirit of God in fellow believers will stir one another up and spur one another on in the faith.

Reminding each other the Lord keeps you, dear brother, dear sister. The Lord guards you. The Lord loves you. We can rejoice and we can rest.

We're going to sing in a moment. Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what thou art. I am finding out the greatness of thy loving heart.

[38 : 41] Thou has bid me gaze upon thee and as thy beauty fills my soul, for by thy transforming power, thou hast made me whole.

So dear Christian, rejoice and rest in Christ. He has accomplished his mission in this world so that his joy may be fulfilled in you.

Let's pray. Oh Lord, please train our hearts to treasure your son, Jesus Christ, above all.

Please grow our faith, grow our love, grow our joy as we rest in him. In the words of 1 Peter 1.8, though we do not see our Lord Jesus now, we believe in him and we rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory.

Please give us more of this joy, we ask. Amen.