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SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

BOTH+AND — JOY & SORROW

Warm-Up Question:

What is something from this week or weekend that brought you joy?

READ: Romans 5:1-11; John 16:20, 22

I. JOY + SORROW: JUSTIFICATION

- ▶ Paul says in v. 6-11 that we were all at one time “weak,” “ungodly,” “sinners,” and even “enemies” of God deserving his wrath. Discuss how each of these describe a different aspect of our condition before God outside of Christ.
- ▶ Read the quote in the sidebar and discuss how Christian joy and vitality strangely come through believing how Paul describes our condition above.
- ▶ From v. 9-11, what are the results of “Christ died for us”? Discuss what each word/concept means and which one most brings you most joy as you think of it?

II. JOY + SORROW: SUFFERING

- ▶ From v. 3-5, what are some of the benefits of our suffering? (Also James 1:2-4)
- ▶ Have you experienced some suffering or sorrow in your life that has brought about any of those benefits mentioned? Share how if so.
- ▶ How could suffering actually result in the increase of your joy, both here in this life and the life to come?

III. JOY + SORROW: HOPE OF GLORY

- ▶ Discuss what you think the image means of God’s love being “poured into our hearts”? What difference might that make in the midst of suffering?
- ▶ Read John 16:20-22 and discuss the perspective Jesus wants us to have in the midst of any moments of sorrow in this life?
- ▶ **Share any current suffering or sorrow in your life right now and then have one other in your group pray for some of the things gleaned from this study.**

"Fallen Human beings enter into joy only through the door of despair. Fullness can be had only through the emptiness. That happens decisively at conversion, as we confess our hopelessly sinful predicament for the first time and collapse into the arms of Jesus, and then remains the ongoing rhythm throughout the Christian life. If you are not growing as a Christian or bored with your faith, one reason may be that you have drifted out of the healthy discipline of self-despair." — Dane Ortlund

For Prayer:

- If anyone is experiencing a moment of suffering or sorrow, let them share and then pray for them.
- Pray for Christians in the world that are suffering through persecution. Pray for joy in Jesus.



SEVEN RIVERS
CHURCH

BOTH + AND — JOY + SORROW
Romans 5:1-11

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Scriptures Used

Rom. 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, **4** and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, **5** and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

Rom. 5:6 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. **7** For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — **8** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. **10** For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. **11** More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

John 16:20 Truly, truly, I say to you, you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will turn into joy. **21** When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world. **22** So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.

James 1:2 Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, **3** for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. **4** And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Some Thoughts:

I. JOY + SORROW: JUSTIFICATION

- ▶ Paul says in v. 6-11 that we were all at one time “weak,” “ungodly,” “sinners,” and even “enemies” of God deserving his wrath. Discuss how each of these describe a different aspect of our condition before God outside of Christ. For example, **weak** doesn’t mean physically weak. It means we are not strong or capable enough to accomplish what is needed. Too weak for what?
 - Ungodly — Usually we only describe people who do the “bad” or outward sins as ungodly. How could you actually be described as “ungodly” outside of Christ?
 - “Sin” means to miss the mark. We’re not too bad if the mark is others around us. How far have you missed the mark if the standard is the “glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), which includes his holiness, perfection and righteousness?
- ▶ From v. 9-11, what are the results of “Christ died for us”? Discuss what each word/concept means and which one most brings you most joy as you think of it?
 - **Justified by his blood** — means “to be declared righteous” - Can we ever add anything else, any more righteousness? No! We will never be considered more righteous as we are considered now. It is the same as Jesus!
 - **Saved from the wrath of God** — wrath was poured out for our sin, just not on us. Being that it was all poured out on Jesus, there will never be one ounce of it left for us.
 - **Reconciled to God** - The whole purpose of God was a loving relationship with us. Reconciliation is the act of restoring us to that right and loving relationship.

II. JOY + SORROW: SUFFERING

- ▶ From v. 3-5, what are some of the benefits of our suffering? (Also James 1:2-4)
It doesn’t just result in some things, it actually “produces” things such as endurance, character, hope and the experience of God’s love being poured into our hearts. James talks of suffering being a part of making us “mature and complete, not lacking anything.”

It’d be good to discuss how exactly suffering produces each of these things (endurance, character, and hope). How might we not have as much of these things without sorrow? What is the real benefit of being more mature and complete? How do times of suffering actually lead us to not lack anything?

III. JOY + SORROW: HOPE OF GLORY

- ▶ Discuss what you think the image means of God’s love being “poured into our hearts”? What difference might that make in the midst of suffering?
Most of us know intellectually about God’s love, but it’s a different thing when it is “poured into our hearts.” Suffering often creates emotional cracks in the soul that prepare the way to experience God’s love in ways we didn’t before the sorrow. We say things like, “I know God loved me... but now I really feel it.” If one of our primary inner desires and pleasures in life is to be known and loved, and if our suffering actually leads us to experience that from God all the more, then it might actually lead many of us to grieve the suffering while also being thankful for what it brought in our relationship with God.
- ▶ Read John 16:20-22 and discuss the perspective Jesus wants us to have in the midst of any moments of sorrow in this life?
One of the hardest things about our suffering is thinking that it will never end. Knowing there is a light at the end of the tunnel changes how we grieve in the midst of the darkness. Knowing our sorrow will be turned to joy, that our current suffering will result in future glory changes our perspective and how we endure. The illustration of having a baby is a great one to discuss. Years and years of joy of a loving relationship with a child bring perspective to the current suffering of childbirth.

It’d be good to ponder our future joy and glory that is to come, and how that should affect any current suffering.