

Sorrowful Yet Always Rejoicing



Sermon Text

2 Corinthians 6:2-10



Big Idea

We all want the sort of joy that is impervious to circumstance. But, in all of our attempts to secure it for ourselves, we inevitably end up making costly reductions and distorting reality. As such, whatever joy we do find feels false. If we would have this joy in truth, we must find it in Christ!

(1) The World's Strategies

Strategy #1: Deny—The first strategy we see often taken up by people is to deny the broken and sorrowful things of life altogether. They act like they're fine, even as their life is falling apart around them. We don't know how to deal with the fact that this world is hard so we find it best just to deny it.

Strategy #2: Escape—These are the people who would at least admit: "Yes I am sad," but then they quickly go on to say: "But I don't want to think about it. I don't want to deal with it. I don't want to work through it. I just want an escape route."

Strategy #3: Blame—It's so much easier to say: "You're the problem. You better go figure that out." It's a lot harder to say: "I see what I've done here. I'm sorry. I need help." That feels a lot more risky. It threatens our joy. Because if I'm a part of the mess, well, what do I do with that? But if it's all you, well, then I can go on my way and keep feeling good about myself.

Strategy #4: Fix—When we act like we can do away with the sorrow, we can secure the impervious joy—whether by our work, or getting a new relationship, or reaching certain goals, etc.—we radically underestimate the depth and extent of our problem. The problem is not just somewhere out there in our circumstances. It's not something you can get your hands on and manipulate. You can't throw money at this problem.

Strategy #5: Accept—This last one isn't so much a strategy for joy as much as it is a forfeiture of the very pursuit altogether. These are the sorts of people that say: "I've tried everything and it hasn't worked. I see the hardships of this place. I feel the emptiness and the sadness of it. And do you know what? That's just life. Accept it."

(2) Easter's Solution!

Only the cross of Christ can sufficiently address the sorrow we all experience and provide the joy we all long for. The joy that the world offers has to go momentarily blind to other parts of reality—you have to deny something, escape something, blame something on someone else. But joy in Jesus looks wide eyed and takes it all in and is settled somewhere deeper than even the sorrow and pain. It is not naïve and superficial on the one hand. Nor is it hopeless and existential on the other. We can be honest about the brokenness, about the ugliness of sin, about the mess we've made of all of this, and yet not fall off into despair. We can have hope and joy—the kind that has a depth to it, a weightiness to it. We see this broken world and yet still see reason to rejoice. Because we see the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Reflection Questions



- Which of the world's strategies do you find yourself most tempted towards? Give an example of how this played out recently. Why do you think you are inclined to pursue joy in this way? How does the death and resurrection of Jesus offer something deeper and more lasting?
- Have you experienced the strange mixture of Christian emotions—the sorrow that coexists with joy? How has coming to Christ made you both more sorrowful and more joyful at the same time?