

Small Group Discussion Guide — March 21, 2021

- Series: Way, Truth, Life
 - Sermon: The Joyful Ones
 - Scripture: John 17: 13-24 (NIV)
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FOLLOW-UP FROM LAST WEEK:

In what ways did you see the glory of God in the world this past week, perhaps in a sunset or the beauty of his creation? What about in your own life? Did you find ways to glorify God this week?

CONNECT:

1. What stood out to you from this past week's service, and why?
2. What are the experiences in our world that you would miss the most if you suddenly could not have them anymore?

ENGAGE:

Read John 17: 13-24.

1. As far as we can tell, Jesus is praying for his disciples within their hearing. How do you think you'd feel to hear Jesus pray for you? What, if anything, would it change in your heart?
2. In verse 13, Jesus prays that his followers would have the "full measure of my joy within them." How would you define "joy" in your own words? What would Jesus' joy in you look like?
3. In verse 14, what does Jesus mean by the phrase, "not of this world?" What does that look like in actual life?
4. In verses 20-23, Jesus prays for his disciples and for us, that we would live in unity. How can we have the same unity that Jesus has with the Father? What is the biggest obstacle to Christian unity today?

APPLY:

1. David suggested that joy cannot be fully understood outside of love, since love is the source of all virtue. What do you think about this idea? How does the scarcity of joy manifest itself in our world today?
2. Christians have often been told to be "**in** the world but not **of** the world." For most of us, this is a source of great tension, so much so that we often opt for either isolation from the world or compromise with it. Which one of these extremes is the most tempting to you?
3. Unity is in short supply in the world, even more so it seems within Christianity. David said that unity is difficult for Christians if we have dual allegiances. How do you think the idea of dual allegiances plays into disunity? How does the lack of unity within the church hurt our witness to the world?

PRAY:

Heavenly Father, forgive us for the times we place other gods before you. Forgive us for too often loving this world more than we love you. We pray that the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with the joy that only comes when we love others, and the unity that is only possible when our devotion to you is undivided. Amen

GOING DEEPER

Joy is a rare emotion. It is also hard to define... something deeper than mere happiness, and more emotionally profound than simple contentment. What experiences in life are most often associated with joy? Is your walk with Christ something that could fairly be described as joyful? If not, what steps might you take to change that?

SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE

John 15: 11

John 16: 21

Luke 6: 22

Joshua 24: 16

John 1: 4

Ephesians 4: 4-6

QUOTES

"Joy is sharply distinguished from both happiness, which is dependent on circumstances, and pleasure, which is from the senses. Joy transcends circumstances and senses."

Os Guinness

"The world and its strategies may help you to survive for a long time, but they cannot help you live life that is full life, eternally and essentially, because the world is not the source even of its own life, let alone yours. Spiritually, you do not belong to the world."

Henri Nouwen

"I have come to see that the more we tried to make a heaven out of this world - the more we grounded our comfort and security in it - the less we were able to enjoy it."

Timothy Keller

"If we find in ourselves a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that we were made for another world."

CS Lewis

"Joy is our portion in his fellowship. It is his joy, and that is not a small joy or a repressed joy. It is a robust joy..."

Dallas Willard