



***Theme: Are You Restless?  
"Complete Joy"***

Sermon preached by Jeff Huber  
November 14-15, 2020

**Scripture: John 17:20-21**

**Weekly Memory Verse:**

***<sup>23</sup> "The master said, 'Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let's celebrate together!'" --  
Mathew 25:23***

**Scripture Readings:**

Psalm 4:6-8, Proverbs 21:15, John 15:11-13, Matthew 25:23

**VIDEO      Sermon Intro**

**SLIDE      "Complete Joy"**

My name is Jeff Huber and I serve as lead Pastor here at Summit Church in Durango. We are so glad you are worshipping with us today. Since we are back to worshipping online, we ask at some point you will let us know that you are here by putting your name in the chat box or sending us an email from our website. We also have ushers online to welcome you and they can

answer any questions you might have.

Lewis Smedes, the renowned Christian author, ethicist, and theologian that passed away in 2002, wrote these words.

### **GRAPHIC      You and I were created for joy**

***“You and I were created for joy, and if we miss it, we miss the reason for our existence. If our joy is honest joy, it must somehow be congruous with human tragedy. This is the test of joy’s integrity. It is compatible with pain. Only the heart that hurts has a right to joy.”***

These days, many of us have been struggling with where to find joy because our hearts seem restless. Smedes reminds us that joy is actually found and made complete in the midst of hurts, challenge and even human tragedy. Today were going to talk about how we find that joy which is complete. I think that sometimes we look for joy in all the wrong places and we can miss out on the joy which is right underneath our noses.

There are 535 verses in the Bible which talk about joy, or use the word joyfully, rejoicing, rejoiced, rejoiced and joy. These verses seem to fall into four main categories that I want us to look at today together. The first is very simple because it’s the kind of joy that we experience when something good happens. We get a huge promotion at work and we feel joy, at least for the first day. We think, “This is awesome! I got a raise!”

### **GRAPHIC   Jump for Joy**

When most people have their first child, there is joy. People handout chewing gum or cigars and they get balloons and gifts, and everything is great for the first eight hours until he realized you’re never going to sleep again! We get married and there is a wedding reception and there is joy. The Broncos win the Super Bowl, or the Colorado Buffaloes win a bowl game or, you fill in the blank for your favorite sports team wins something, and there

is joy.

## **GRAPHIC              Broncos Joy**

These Broncos fans were so excited after Super Bowl L and they threw a parade and they waved flags. But you don't win every game and football is much different this year because of COVID. Even if you win the Super Bowl, that's it and it's done for the year. We won't get a promotion every week. We can only have a first child once. If these amazing, awesome things which happened in our lives are our only source of joy, we will never have enough to have ongoing joy.

We do find in the Bible this was one source of joy. When babies are born or when kings are installed on the throne, there is a celebration and joy. When the Israelites went to battle and one against all odds, there was joy. In 2 Chronicles 20 we find Jehoshaphat leads the armies of Israel into battle and expected to lose. They defeated their enemies and we read this.

**BIBLE              <sup>27</sup> Then, led by Jehoshaphat, all the men of Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Jerusalem, for the Lord had given them cause to rejoice over their enemies. <sup>28</sup> They entered Jerusalem and went to the temple of the Lord with harps and lyres and trumpets.**

If you are wondering where the phrase jumping Jehoshaphat comes from, it is from this king of Israel. The phrase became common in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, substituting it for cuss words. It seems strange because Jehoshaphat was known for standing still and listening to God, so the phrase may have been seen as ironic, but it also may refer to the fact that when they enter Jerusalem they were jumping and dancing and singing after victory. What we do know is that the Bible refers to remarkably joyful experiences as a time when people have this emotion of joy. We should savor these moments of joy and bliss, but we all know we don't experience joy every moment of

every day of our lives.

So, where else do we find joy? We can do certain things which bring us joy and even plan them. We might have a great vacation with our family that we hope is joyful. Of course, by the time we get back from this wonderful vacation we planned, we need another vacation to rest! Sometimes it can be joyful to go shopping or to engage in a favorite hobby. What we do know is we can't buy our way into ongoing, consistent joy. We realize eventually that stuff doesn't bring us the kind of joy we were hoping for. While we can experience joy with pleasurable experiences, and we can't have those experiences all the time.

## **GRAPHIC          Slice of Joy**

There is also a simple joy which comes from being mindful. When we pay attention to what's around us, we can experience joy. I heard an author once talk about this as "slices of joy." There can be slices of joy just under our nose, all the time, if we pay attention. When we pay attention, we do notice things around us for which we can be grateful and can bring us joy. We know that people are happier and more content when they stop to count their blessings each day. Prayer can help us to stop and do this as well as a gratitude journal. When we remember things for which we are grateful, we experience the joy of that moment again.

Sometimes, it's as simple as coming home and having a dog to welcome you and run around your legs until you almost fall over. They are so excited to you and they expect nothing but a pat on the head, or a rub of the tummy, or throwing a toy or some food, then they are yours for life. The changing of the seasons happens every year and yet people drive to our area from all over the world to see the colors change. We do that because it brings us joy to see the beauty around us. Have you ever taken fall leaves and made our projects out of them?

## **GRAPHIC            Fall Leaves Stained Glass**

These moments of joy don't cost anything, but they do require us to pay attention and to stop. My daughter got a new puppy during COVID and the snow we got last weekend was his first. He jumped around like crazy in the stuff and she took this picture. That is pure joy with Phoenix, a dog with the name from Arizona where it is hot, enjoying the snow and cold of Durango!

## **GRAPHIC            Phoenix in the snow**

## **GRAPHIC            Jack in the snow**

Are we paying attention to the joy, which is right under our noses, or on top of our noses as it was for our other dog Jack loves the snow?

Another kind of joy we experience is those moments with people who are important to us. When we care for others, spend time with them, and bless each other, it can bring us joy. I think about moments with family and friends that we often don't have because we are too busy chasing after things that we think will bring us joy. My wife and I had a great night with friends just having dinner and playing a game and being silly last week. I wonder how many times we have been too busy to experience joy. We have too much going on and we don't take the time to do the things which actually was fill us and make us more effective with what we are doing at work.

## **GRAPHIC            Cupcakes**

We also enjoyed a nice lunch together this week at the Yellow Carrot, and I wanted to share with you a pure joyful experience when you get one of these "Happy Cupcakes!" Big thank you to Sari for giving us these, and it's probably good there is no one here in person to fight over who gets them at the end of the service!

One of the greatest sources of joy we can have is the time we spend with people, befriending them, caring for them, loving them and pouring into them. It's our friends and our neighbors and people we don't even know. There is something about giving yourself away to somebody else and building relationships with others that brings us great joy. This is one of the reasons that Jesus performed the church. It wasn't our idea, but Jesus believed we needed community to come together and pray for each other, encourage each other, bless each other.

### **GRAPHICS      Navajo Hope Supply Drive (2 or 3)**

Last Saturday several of you sat in the parking lot in the rain and collected supplies for people on the Navajo nation. I was struck by how much joy there was even in the middle of a rainstorm that we desperately needed here in Durango. Car after car came by and dropped off an entire semi-trailer load of supplies. There was a great spirit, and you could tell people were experiencing joy during those moments.

This is why we have a Connect team and a Director of Connections, Janelle Meyer, to help you find a small group or a Bible study or some other place where you can be with others. One of those things that concerns me most about this time of pandemic are those who are isolated and don't get to experience the joy of being with others. So, we have made phone calls and sent letters and none other things to try to stay connected. We build relationships with people and those relationships have an impact and can bring us joy.

We had one of our church members in the ICU with COVID last week and they couldn't speak on the phone or be visited, so friends and family sent texts they could read. We do those things to bring joy but also to experience joy as we stay connected the best way we can in these days. Community is about caring for each other.

I think of the words of Jesus in John's Gospel at the Last Supper. The Last Supper is several chapters long where he is teaching his disciples one last time these important things they need to know before he dies. The climax comes in chapter 15 where we read these words.

**BIBLE**      <sup>11</sup> I have said these things to you so that my joy will be in you and your joy will be complete. <sup>12</sup> This is my commandment: love each other just as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup> No one has greater love than to give up one's life for one's friends. (CEB)

The joy of Christ will be in us and we will experience that joy completely if we love one another, just the way Christ loved us. Notice that this kind of love is not about warm feelings but about showing loving kindness, or the Hebrew word **hesed**. When we bless and lift up others, we experience joy. We don't do this just for those that we know but for those we have never met before. When Jesus told people the two great commandments were to love God and love their neighbor, someone asked him who fits in that category of neighbor. Jesus then told them the story that everyone knows, even if you're not a follower of Jesus or a person of faith. He told about a **Good Samaritan** who came along and found a complete stranger who was a Democrat, and he was a Republican! They were from completely different worlds and cultures, but the Samaritan found him in trouble having been beat up and left for dead. He gave him a ride on his donkey, provided food and clothing and shelter, even leaving his credit card on file at the hotel to cover any unexpected expenses. That means he may have even used the minibar with the exorbitant prices!

Jesus said, "That's what love looks like, when you do this for one another." It's interesting that Jesus used the word, "complete." The Greek is "pletho", and that word complete also means overflowing and so it looks the glass that is filled to the brim and then overflows when we continue to pour

into it from the pitcher. Overflowing joy spills out of our life and on to things around us. Sometimes, it comes out of our tear ducts as we cry because we feel so joyful and grateful. Sometimes, it's just laughter we can't stop having in the midst of remarkable joy when we love one another.

When I was doing youth ministry full-time, there was a song that was part of our repertoire that we sang constantly with our young people. It was a gospel song in some ways that was written in 1972 by Bill Withers. When I hear the refrain, I can hear Jesus singing it through the voices of the kids I served all those years. I can hear Jesus asking us to sing it to other people. Withers was inducted into the Rock N Roll Hall of Fame in 2015 and he passed away this year in March after a long illness. I love this last time he sang this song with John Legend and Stevie Wonder. Let's take a listen.

**VIDEO                      Lean on Me**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YapAxPfRyl&ab\\_channel=Rock%26RollHollofFame](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YapAxPfRyl&ab_channel=Rock%26RollHollofFame)

Bill was struggling when this was recorded, and I thought it was beautiful how he was carried by John Legend and Stevie Wonder and in many ways embodied the song about leaning on each other when we have a load that is too heavy to carry by ourselves. Lean on me when you're not strong and I'll be your friend to help you carry on; for, it won't be long, until I need somebody to lean on. There is a joy in being the shoulder or someone else to lean upon. There is a joy in coming alongside others when they need a friend. Not only do we bring joy to others only serve them, but we experience joy that is overflowing. The apostle Paul put it this way in Galatians 6.

**BIBLE                      <sup>2</sup> Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.**

Alex Trebek has been the host of Jeopardy for 36 years and he



announced a year and a half ago that he was diagnosed with stage IV pancreatic cancer. He made light of it back then because he said he still has two more years on his contract. He succumbed to that illness in the past few weeks, but he continued to lead the show even during his chemotherapy and other painful cancer treatments. Shortly after he made the announcement, he was hosting the show with three college student contestants, one of whom had one over \$100,000. This episode went viral and partly because of this interaction you're going to see between Alex and Dhruv, as he gives the question back to Alex for his final answer.

**VIDEO      Jeopardy with Alex and Dhruv**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-McR3sBWNRA&ab\\_channel=EyewitnessNewsABC7NY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-McR3sBWNRA&ab_channel=EyewitnessNewsABC7NY)

I don't know if you caught Alex tearing up a bit, but that message cost Dhruv \$1995, in order to say, "We love you Alex." There's something very moving and touching and even joyful about that short moment. Here's a question each one of us should ask ourselves.

**SLIDE      How much are we willing to give up, to let somebody else know that they're loved?**

How much of our time, resources, or influence are we willing to give up helping other people know that they are loved and to bring them joy in the midst of difficult times? This is what Jesus is talking about in the story of the good Samaritan and as he talks with his disciples the gospel of John at the end of his life.

I want you to think of a time when you gave something to someone else who was struggling? If you can't think of a time, then that's a problem in and of itself that I hope you will remedy this season. Did giving to someone else and serving them bring you joy? That is meant to be a rhetorical

question. Whether you are serving at Manna soup kitchen, or Habitat for Humanity building homes, serving in Kenya or Guatemala or on the Navajo nation or caring for the neighbor next door who needs groceries, I know that many of you have experienced joy.

## **GRAPHIC            Manna Thanksgiving Invitation 2020**

This year we have had to cancel the community Thanksgiving dinner that happens down the fairgrounds and instead we will be supporting Manna soup kitchen as they make food to go that can be picked up between 10 AM and 2 PM on Thanksgiving day. While they cannot have any volunteers because of restrictions due to COVID, they can use donations and we plan to send some there from our church and if you would like to join in then you can write a check or give online and make a notation that for Manna soup kitchen. I love how the writer of Proverbs puts this in chapter 21.

## **BIBLE            <sup>15</sup> Justice is a joy to the godly, but it terrifies evildoers.**

We discover joy when we give ourselves a way and serve others and live into the commandments of Jesus. I mentioned this a few weeks ago, but I truly believe that one of the reasons we get terrified and fearful is because we are so focused on ourselves and when we get selfish we become terrified, but when we give and do acts of justice, we experience joy.

Jesus talks about this when he mentions the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, which is an entire chapter about the last judgment in the end times. Jesus talks about a king, which is meant to be a metaphor for himself, leaving for a period of time and telling everyone that one day he will return. The king left his servants in charge of all his possessions. He gave one servant five talents, which is a very large sum of money, probably worth millions today. To another he gave three talents of silver and to the last he gave one talents of silver, telling all of them to be good stewards of this possessions while he was away.

The servant who had one talent buried it because he wanted to be sure he gave at least that one talent back to the master. The master was extremely disappointed because he didn't use the gifts given to him, but instead simply buried them. The servants who got five and three talents, multiply them by using them. They returned back double what they have been given to their master and here is what we read Jesus says about the story. Is our memory verse from Matthew 25 this week.

**BIBLE**      <sup>23</sup> **“The master said, ‘Well done, my good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in handling this small amount, so now I will give you many more responsibilities. Let’s celebrate together!’**

Another translation of that last line is this.

**BIBLE**      **Enter into the joy of your master!**

For us, it means taking our time, talent and resources and bringing more good into the world than we received. We are invited into the joy of our Lord and Savior on the last day by experiencing joy today, here and now, because we understand that everything we have belongs to God. When we are willing to share those blessings, it changes everything, and it will calm our restless hearts and enable us to celebrate and enter into the joy of our heavenly father.

**SLIDE**      **What do we do when we can’t fathom joy?**

I also want to recognize that there are moments in our lives where we can’t even fathom how to find joy. Things are so difficult and challenging, especially during a time of pandemic or a job loss or other things that many are experiencing today, where the idea of joy seems far away and unattainable. I have met with people over the past few weeks going through divorce and dealing with terminal illness and sick children and struggles with

alcohol and drug abuse and family members who have taken their own lives. I've been praying for each of these families each day. I had one person tell me they feel hopeless and lost, like there is nothing left to hold onto. They feel like they are grasping at straws. It is hard to feel joy when you are in a place like that, when horrible things happened in your life.

What I found fascinating is that of the 535 passages about joy that we find in the Bible, more than half of them were written by people or for people that were walking through hell. People that were walking in the valley of the shadow of death and were living under intense oppression in exile. There are people who had just watched their city destroyed for their family killed or facing enemies they had no way of conquering and dealing with illness or death. What was written to these persons was a promise of joy.

#### **SLIDE      The Promise of Joy**

They were being promised that the worst thing would not be the last thing. They were being promised that God would not abandon them, and God would walk with them through their hell on earth. The promise was that they would make it through to the other side, one way or the other, because God always gets the final word. God will carry and sustain us, and we will find joy on the other side if we will hold on and don't give up on our faith. God doesn't cause these horrible things to happen, but God will see us through in a broken, imperfect and fragile world. It doesn't mean that God will make it all better the way we wanted to be better. It doesn't mean that a marriage is miraculously fixed, or a tumor suddenly goes away, although I pray every day for miracles like that.

The promise of joy does mean that no matter what happens, God has a hold of us in those moments that feel like we are so broken we can't survive, and God promises not to let go. Jesus has said that he prepares a place for us. There is a building reserved for us, not made by human hands, but eternal

in the heavens. He said, “I am the resurrection and I’m the life and those who believe in me will never die.” These are the promises we have in Scripture so that even though we are walking through darkness, we know there is light that will come.

One of the places we find this promise is in Psalm 4 we read these words.

**BIBLE      <sup>4</sup> Don’t sin by letting anger control you.  
                  Think about it overnight and remain silent.  
<sup>5</sup> Offer sacrifices in the right spirit,  
                  and trust the Lord.**

Let’s stop right there and recognize that one of the best ways to experience joy when we have a restless heart, is to go to bed and not let our anger overrule us. We are encouraged to offer our lives and give of ourselves with the right spirit and that will help us trust in the Lord. The psalmist goes on with these words.

**BIBLE      <sup>6</sup> Many people say, “Who will show us better times?”  
                  Let your face smile on us, Lord.  
<sup>7</sup> You have given me greater joy  
                  than those who have abundant harvests of grain and new  
                  wine.  
<sup>8</sup> In peace I will lie down and sleep,  
                  for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe.**

There is this idea that joy, greater joy, complete joy, doesn’t come from our stuff or from everything going just the way we want. The powerful idea is that joy and peace come down when we invite God to walk alongside of us and recognize that God is present in every one of those moments. The psalmist said in Psalm 30 these words.

**BIBLE**      <sup>11</sup> **You have turned my mourning into joyful dancing.  
You have taken away my clothes of mourning and clothed  
me with joy,  
<sup>12</sup> that I might sing praises to you and not be silent.  
O Lord my God, I will give you thanks forever! (NLT)**

Psalm 36 is a song of lament and pain, but then turns in verse 7.

**BIBLE**      <sup>7</sup> **Your faithful love is priceless, God!  
Humanity finds refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
<sup>8</sup> They feast on the bounty of your house;  
you let them drink from your river of pure joy. (CEB)**

Faith is the source of our deepest joy in the end. It is an absolute trust in God that the writer of Hebrews reflects in chapter 11.

**BIBLE**      **Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (NRSV)**

DJ is a United Methodist pastor with a strange illness that the doctors cannot get a handle on. He has three young daughters and serves a church outside of Seattle, Washington. He wrote about his experience and talked about feeling an **intense sense of joy** in the middle of the treatments for his illness. His prognosis is not good because the disease is rare and very difficult to treat. He's not sure how much time you have left, which can imagine would be really difficult for someone with twin daughters who are 10 and another daughter who is 12. But he wrote these words.

*I have an unexplainable sense of peace. I don't feel fatalistic, negative or even depressed. I'm not upset with God because I know God didn't make me sick. I'm grateful for the chances I have to love my wife, walk with my children and serve my community as a United Methodist pastor. Laney, my wife, asked me if I'm scared about the moment when*

*I die. I'm not. I feel like I am in the middle of the best meal I have ever had, and I want to savor each and every second. I want to make sure that everyone around me knows how good and beautiful the meal is, when we experience the amazing peace and presence of Jesus. I am grateful for today, and because the lilies of the field are taken care of, I'm sure that I am to. It is the presence of God that gives us complete joy, the knowledge that we are not alone.*

My hope and prayer is that each one of us would recognize that joy is not just about external things that we are trying to grab onto, but about something inside which happens when we realize we are not on this journey alone, and that Jesus walks with us. I want to invite you to say this Scripture memory verse for this week and this powerful truth from the mouth of Jesus together out loud, because I hope it is the words that you carry with you even in the darkest moments.

**BIBLE**      ***Well done, my good and faithful servant... Enter into the joy of your master!***

Let's pray.

**SLIDE**              **Prayer**

I invite you to whisper this prayer under your breath.

*God, help me to see the joy right in front of me all the time...help me to pay attention to the good and beautiful things all around me... And to give thanks for them... Help me Lord to bless others... To bear other's burdens... To love with your love... Help me Lord to trust you no matter how dark my circumstances... Knowing that you walk with me and will not go...*

*Gracious God, for everyone and worship with us today. I know there are people listening today who have been walking through hell on earth this past year. I pray that somewhere in this moment together they might sense your*

*presence walking with them. While weeping may endure for the night, I pray that joy will come in the morning. God, I know that some of us have yet to discover the joy of serving others and blessing them. Help us to stop buying our way to joy and instead learn to give our way to joy. Help us to lean on you when we are not strong, knowing that you will be our friend. We pray these things in your Holy Name. Amen*