

Our Joy: Complete In Christ

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[0 : 00] When Nathan texted me several weeks ago and asked me if I would be willing to preach during the Advent season. I was honored for sure, just because I reflect on my life over the past six years as a young believer in the faith.

And so often do not feel that I am worthy of standing up here preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to you all. And at the same time, he asked me if I would be interested in preaching on joy or peace. And I felt more confident and prepared in that moment to preach on peace. And as I reflected on that and prayed through that over that week that he had asked me, I decided that I wanted to preach on joy because I don't know or at that time I didn't believe that I fully understood what joy in Christ means.

So it was a task that I had an opportunity to take on so that I would understand what joy in the Advent means. So today, that's my hope, is that I would be able to translate to you what I've learned about joy in regards to the coming of Christ.

And that your joy would also be made complete in that. So I'll be camping out most of the day or most of the morning in the book of Philippians. There's not one verse specifically that I'm going to hone in on, which is abnormal.

[1 : 24] But it is because it's a topical text or a topical sermon on joy. So I'm going to be kind of going through several different verses throughout the Scripture, but predominantly in the book of Philippians.

So if you want to find your place there, you can. Philippians is nicknamed the Epistle of Joy. And it's fitting.

The word joy or its joy in its verb, rejoice, is found 14 times in the book of Philippians.

The word Christ is found 50 times in the book of Philippians. So there is a correlation there that I hope to draw this morning. But I'm going to start with giving you two different definitions of joy. I'm going to give you the world's definition of joy, just simply from a Google search of how do you define joy. How does Google, which I can easily say is a pretty good reflection, what Google does, what they believe, is a pretty good reflection of what the world, by and large, believes and does and thinks.

[2 : 31] So the Google definition that I found of joy is, it is a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. A feeling of great pleasure and happiness.

Something that I kind of thought about that, okay, well, it's a feeling, this is going to be a little bit difficult, because I'm a man, I don't often like to talk about my feelings. But at the same time, the Christian definition, a great definition that I found by John Piper, also defines it as a feeling, which made it even more difficult for me.

There's no getting around the fact that joy is a feeling that I produce. So his definition, I want you to copy this down if you write, it is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ in his word and in his works.

So there are four main elements of that definition, and I'm going to be breaking those down this morning in a more practical sense.

But those key elements, it is a feeling. It cannot be conjured up, it cannot be manufactured. That's one of my biggest struggles in the early part of my marriage right now, is sometimes I know that I'm supposed to be feeling something, but I may wake up in the morning and not feel certain affections towards my wife.

[4 : 08] I may not feel like going into work. These are certain things that I feel or that I don't feel. And I've learned that I can't simply manufacture those feelings. Despite what my mind is telling me, my soul is not producing those feelings.

And it's impossible for you to simply produce those feelings on your own. It is something that your soul produces. Again, it is in the soul. It's feelings and emotions.

And it is produced by the Holy Spirit. Joy is produced by the Holy Spirit. True joy. Joy in Christ is produced by the Holy Spirit. I'm just going to read this.

You don't have to turn here. But Galatians 5.22 and part of 23 gives you the fruits of the Spirit. This is a production of the Spirit. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Those are all things that the Holy Spirit within you as a Christian does produce. If you find that you lack all of those, then you need to reflect on whether or not the Holy Spirit is within you.

[5 : 20] If it's not producing any of these things, then it's something to be questioned. It's something to be sought out. And then the final element of John Piper's definition, as he causes us to see the beauty of Christ.

So this is ultimately where our joy hangs. This is ultimately where it comes from. This is, if there is any fact that produces the joy within your soul, it's that it is in Christ.

And so this morning, as we're talking about the Advent season, Advent means coming. It means the coming of Christ. So how does the coming of Christ produce joy within us as a believer?

A couple of the texts that I found that relate directly to Jesus' coming are straight from his mouth when he comes here to earth. He says in Luke 19.10, no need to turn there, for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.

Key word there, talking about the Advent, for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost. In Mark 2.17, he says, I came not to call the righteous.

[6 : 32] And he was actually talking about those who believed that they were righteous. He's talking to the Pharisees. They weren't righteous. Despite what they believed, despite what their works testified outwardly, they were not righteous.

But he says, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Therefore, he came to call sinners. If there's anyone in here that believes that they're not a sinner, that you are part of the righteous, before knowing Christ, turn with me to Romans 3.19.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be closed, and all the world may become accountable to God.

All the world may become accountable to God. Because by the works of the law, no flesh will be justified in his sight, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin. He's talking to Jews first, and then he's talking to the Gentiles.

For those who believe that you're saved by your works of the law, by knowing the law, by thinking that you uphold the law, you've actually fallen incredibly short of it. There's been nothing in you that has produced the righteousness that is required by a holy God.

[7 : 51] So therefore, the law is what condemns you. Every single one of us in this room have been condemned by the law, written by a holy God, that reflects his character. So when we talk about Jesus coming, we know, therefore, that if we are sinners, he had to come to save us from the wrath that was to come, the justice that was justified, and that will be justified by God.

As he gives his wrath to the people who disobey him, who do not believe in him, who do not follow his law, who do not uphold it to the T. Therefore, he sent his son to live and exemplify that law to the fullest extent, so that we would be found righteous in him.

I want to give you a couple of examples of joy produced by the coming of Christ as he came to earth for the first time as a child. Turn with me to Luke 2.

And this is something that I really wanted to understand. I said, so, we talk about the advent, the coming of Christ, so we're celebrating Christmas.

Surely there is something, just a very tangible thing that I can find in historical accounts that would show me someone's joy about Jesus coming.

[9 : 06] I found it in Luke 2. I'm going to start in verse 25, and I'm going to read through 32. It's about a man named Simeon.

He's a high priest devoted to the Lord. And he's definitely familiar with the Old Testament because he recites it in his rejoicing once he sees the Messiah, once he sees baby Jesus.

And then I'm going to go back to where, in the Old Testament, in Isaiah, where he is quoting, where Simeon is quoting from there. And it's showing you who Jesus is or what he was supposed to be when he came.

And all of this should produce the joy that we're looking for. I'm going to start in 25. And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. And this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel.

And the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple.

[10:12] And when the parents brought in the child Jesus to carry out for him the custom of the law, then he took him into his arms and blessed God and said, so what he's about to say is his outward expression, his verbal expression of his joy that he now receives in getting to hold the Christ in his arms.

Now, Lord, you are releasing your slave to depart in peace. I mean, I can go in death and be happy. According to your work, for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of your people, Israel. And that's his outward expression of his joy. That's him rejoicing that he now gets to witness, bear witness of the coming of Christ. Turn with me to Isaiah 49. I'm going to read about half of Isaiah 49, verses 1 through 13.

And this whole prophecy is about Jesus coming to earth to save man. And in the end of it, the beautiful part, at least the end of the half that I'm going to read, is it tells you again that it should produce some sort of rejoicing.

It should produce some sort of joy that Jesus has come. Listen to me, O islands, and pay attention, you peoples from afar. The Lord called me from the womb, from the body of my mother he named me.

[11:54] He has made my mouth like a sharp sword, in the shadow of his hand, he has concealed me. He has also made me a select arrow. He has hidden me in his quiver. He said to me, you are my servant, Israel, in whom I will show my glory.

But I said, I have toiled in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing in vanity, yet surely the justice due to me is with the Lord and my reward with my God. And now he says, the Lord who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him so that Israel might be gathered to him for I am honored in the sight of the Lord and my God is my strength.

He says, it is too small a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel. I will also make you a light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.

I'm going to stop right there real quick. Right there he's saying that I'm not sending Jesus Christ just simply to save the Jews. I'm not coming here just simply to save those who are of Israel.

I'm going to make your name great and known amongst all of the nations so that their joy may be complete. Thus says the Lord the Redeemer of Israel and its Holy One to the despised one to the one abhorred by the nation to the servant of rulers kings will see and arise princes will also bow down because of the Lord who is faithful the Holy One of Israel who has chosen you.

[13:16] Thus says the Lord in a favorable time I have answered you and in a day of salvation I have helped you and I will keep you and give you for a covenant of the people to restore the land to make them inherit the desolate heritages.

Saying to those who are bound go forth to those who are in darkness show yourselves along the roads they will feed and their pasture will be on all bare will be on all bare heights.

They will not hunger or thirst nor will the scorching heat or sun strike them down for he who has compassion on them will lead them and will guide them to springs of water I will make my mountains a road and my highways will be raised up behold these will come from afar and low these will come from the north and from the west and these will come from the land of Sinem shout for joy O heavens and rejoice O earth break forth into joyful shouting O mountains the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

So again the coming of Christ was always supposed to produce joy. It's a beautiful testimony of that and again Simeon gets to live that out as he now understands the prophecies of old he sees that now fulfilled in Christ and he's pleased to know that the Messiah has come to save his people.

So the practical meanings of that what does that mean for the Christian? There are two things I'm going to hone in on so where does a Christian find their joy and we've talked about that he finds it in Christ but specifically where does he find it in Christ?

[14:56] When we talk about it when we say in Christ abide in Christ sometimes I struggle with that because it can be like an abstract thing how do we do that? How do we abide in Christ?

And then also how does a Christian express their newfound joy? So on the subject of where does a Christian find their joy?

Well they find it first and foremost in their belief in the coming of Jesus Christ it is in their faith in the coming of Jesus Christ it is in their faith in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins and it is also in the faith that he rose from the dead you know we talk about we often use the I think it's in 1 Corinthians Paul talks about at Easter we often bring this up that we are the most to be pitied if Jesus Christ did not rise from the dead that's right he's absolutely right we have no joy if Christ did not rise from the dead so that was the culmination of what he came here to do he came here to live righteously he came here to die on behalf of our sins and he came here died resurrected and conquered death go to Philippians 3 and this is where I'll be spending most of the time again it's in Philippians Paul the apostle believes firmly in his identity in Christ he believes and knows that Christ was sent to die for him on his behalf it was revealed to him it was a revelation by Jesus himself that the law was not going to save Paul so he says in Philippians 3:8 this is something that many of you are familiar with

I'm sure I'm going to read through verse 9 but this is again what shows his true faith in the power of Christ it says more than that I count all things to be lost in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ and may be found in him not having a righteousness of my own derived from the law but that which is through faith in Christ the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith therefore everything the way that Paul found that his identity his joy was made complete was believing in his identity in Christ he's placing full hope in the coming of Christ and the death of Christ and the resurrection of Christ secondly as it's revealed in our faith in Jesus this is affirmed in his word one of the biggest things that

I and Nathan and many others when they come up here they find ways to make the gospel practical to you in your life and one of the most ways that the gospel is made practical on a daily basis in your life is the revelation of Jesus in his word Jesus himself affirms the testimony of scripture the importance of scripture from Genesis 1-1 all the way to the end of Revelation and John he's talking again to the Pharisees the Pharisees were individuals who knew or believed that they knew the scripture many of them could recite the Old Testament I think all it was actually required that all Pharisees all men who attained to this level of priesthood had to recite essentially the entire Old Testament it wasn't called the Old Testament for them can you imagine I think by the time they were like seven or eight or nine if that's what they aspired to be if that's what their family wanted them to be they had to learn the Pentateuch they had to learn the first five books of the Old Testament they had to recite it so even though they believed that they knew what the scripture said it was obvious that when Christ came they didn't see the signs they didn't understand

[18:59] Isaiah 49 because they didn't know that this was the Christ despite all evidence pointing to him being the Christ the chosen one sent to save Israel so he says in John Jesus says to them in John 5:39 you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life it is these that testify about me so there's two ways an individual can look at scripture you can look at scripture and learn to know it learn to understand it historically and place your hope that because you know religious things that is somehow saving to you I can affirm that there was a very there was a small part in my life where I was involved in church from the ages of like 8 to 12 or something to that effect and I don't think I ever opened the Bible to read it for myself but I believed in the good works of the Bible I believed that it was something that identified me as a Christian it was identified me as American thus somehow being a Christian but the truth is is that even if I knew the scriptures from beginning to the end none of that produced any true identity in Christ but Jesus is saying that in those scriptures and he's not only talking about the Old Testament it is talking about the significance him saying this shows you the significance of knowing the Old Testament but he's also talking about the gospels that came after that the epistles that men wrote about our practical life in Jesus Christ all the way to the revelation of John that the scriptures testify about Jesus so if we have our faith in Jesus it would make sense that we are to find and be assured in that hope daily by the seeking of his word especially as Americans especially as literate people you have a great opportunity to know Jesus through his word you have a great opportunity to understand the things that he has said the things that he has commanded of us as his people through the reading of his word with these two things combined you will find your joy complete because you're finding it ultimately in Christ but joy doesn't have much of an application if it's not able to be applied to circumstances in your life so I do agree that feelings are circumstantial things that happen to you

will produce feelings and therefore

I want to talk a little bit about how we use this joy in Christ in our suffering and sorrow because this is where you will find your joy made most complete I promise you I can attest to this with Matt Sossman this week I suffered very minimally compared to most but he and I came under a great attack of poison ivy this week and when I say great I mean the whole right side of my face and neck was ballooned up throughout the entire course of this week and so many times I was repeating to myself I was like I have no joy my again my joy was based on my circumstances I was sore I was my skin was just chewing me up that's how I would describe it spread onto my arms and other parts of my body that was just miserable but at the same time my joy was not based in those external circumstances my true joy was found in Christ again that's a such a small example in comparison to the ways that people have suffered and are in sorrow especially this week but

James says this he says consider it all joy my brethren when you encounter trials of various kinds knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance and let endurance have its perfect result so that you may be perfect and complete lacking in nothing so consider it all joy when you find these trials when you come across these trials when these trials are put onto you because ultimately that joy is to point you to your faith joy is ultimately to point you to your identity in Christ to your belief in the gospel he says that produces an endurance simply says this trial is temporary I don't know how long some people's suffering may last you don't either but even for an 80 year span that is temporary in light of eternity turn with me to 1 Peter 1 3-9 you can hold your place in Philippians because I will go back there the apostle Peter is talking to people who are under tribulation who are being persecuted who are being dispersed who are suffering he wants to encourage them what you're going to find the elements in here is that he encourages them in their identity in Christ and their identity in Christ produces the joy that he's hoping for them to find blessed be the God and father of the Lord Jesus Christ who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away reserved in heaven for you who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time in this you greatly rejoice even though now for a little while if necessary you have been distressed by various trials so that the proof of your faith being more precious than gold which is perishable even though tested by fire may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ and though you have not seen him you love him and though you do not see him now but believe in him you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls the identity that they now have in being believers in the Christ who came produces that joy inexpressible

I want to I didn't know how I was going to tie this in but throughout this week as I was on bed rest essentially all week long because my again the poison ivy was all over my arms up until Friday I did not want to move my arms past this position it was in the elbow and all sorts of places so even talking or texting I was doing this reading I realized how bad my sight is when I would hold a book even this far and had trouble seeing the words on it but I've been reading a book over the past six months called Atlas Shrugged and as I was reflecting on what joy looks like for the non-believer and the believer I found myself getting into the climax of this book and Wes shall not warn me when I got to a certain point I was going to realize how tragic the main character the hero of the story really is so the book climaxes on a 70 page monologue by the hero of the story there's nothing that interrupts him he's been a mysterious figure throughout the entire story and he he gets an opportunity to basically share his whole thoughts to the entire world and explain to them where he believes man's chief joy and his chief aim is

I'll sum it up for you briefly and it's not going to be as intellectual as the author I can put it but ultimately man's joy and his happiness is found in his existence his ability to think and his ability to produce with his thoughts his ability to seek out his own happiness based on the mind that he has so I as I was reading this this week this monologue the words happiness the words joy the words pleasure come up a few times this is where you see Ayn Rand the author of this book you see where she found her joy and she was someone who kind of authored the philosophy of objectivism meaning that there are absolutes in the world and these are things that as Christians you I do believe that most of you would believe in these things which is good it is true they're absolutes Socrates' premises Aristotle's premises what she takes is A is A A is never a non-A 2 plus 2 never equals 5 it will always equal 4 so she's really trying to combat this liberal order of thinking that

things are relative but she even tries to define that define happiness as an absolute thing that can be achieved by man which I agree with her to an extent but I'm going to read to you this excerpt from the main character her hero and you're going to see the flaws in his happiness and where he finds his joy happiness is the successful state of life pain is an agent of death happiness is that state of consciousness which proceeds from the achievement of one's values a morality that dares to tell you to find happiness in the renunciation of your happiness to value the failure of your values is an insolent negation of morality a doctrine that gives you as an ideal the role of a sacrificial animal seeking slaughter on the altars of others is giving you death as your standard by the grace of reality and the nature of life man every man is an end in himself he exists for his own sake and the achievement of his own happiness is his highest moral purpose but neither life nor happiness can be achieved by the pursuit of irrational whims just as man is free to attempt to survive in any random manner but will perish unless he lives as his nature requires so he is free to seek his happiness and any mindless fraud the torture of frustration and all his all he will find unless he seeks the happiness proper to man the purpose of morality is to teach you not to suffer and die but to enjoy yourself and live so I would say yes by and large

[29 : 32] I agree with that conclusion of that statement a man is supposed to find his happiness in the way that he lives and his purpose of life and she is again she is combating several different things in here so I don't I would love I highly encourage many of you to read it it's been considered next to the Bible second to the Bible the most influential book in American history however me trying to understand what her joy and what her happiness looks like it's really a changing thing which is kind of ironic it's relative to her circumstances she Ayn Rand the author never really found the joy that she believed she was looking for she may have defended that she was happy her entire life that she found the joy that was not perishable for the 80 years that she lived on earth I think it was like 75 years but at the same time I can tell you that she did not she met a man when she moved to America from the Soviet Union in 1929 and married him they were married for 50 years which is incredible and you can look at that externally you can say that's someone who was probably very pleased with their marriage very happy and content found a lot of pleasure in that relationship she even dedicated

Atlas Shrugged to her husband Frank O'Connor and Atlas Shrugged was considered her the magnum office was like the main piece of work that defined her as an author that sent her straight into fame I learned this week that she had a 14 year affair with her best friend's husband at the end of her 50 years of marriage so in the last 14 years of her 50 year marriage it was obvious that she was not content it was obvious that she was not pleased and happy she could not find her pleasure and joy in her husband in her relationship the man that she dedicated her greatest work to and she does a great job at arguing the non-absolutes of faith of religion she never once mentions Christ at no point in time does she ever mention Jesus Christ she constantly mentions God she mentions the origins of sin but she doesn't hone in on the absolute truth that Jesus Christ came she doesn't acknowledge that even though there are facts we have it in our scripture it's revealed to us by men who saw him that Jesus was an absolute if Jesus came he came to die if he came to die he also came to rise again and he did that and therefore we know that we can find our joy in the absolute of the personhood of Jesus Christ in tying all that together

I'm going to read you one more quote from Charles Spurgeon in a book that was given to me by a dear friend of mine it's called God's Joy in Your Heart I highly recommend it for anybody who just struggles emotionally wakes up in the morning and does not feel your heart pulled towards Christ finds that you are depressed often this book is a topical book so you don't necessarily need to start in chapter 1 and read to chapter 15 you can pick up in any chapter and read that subject so I'm going to read to you something that defines how we as Christians see our identity in the salvation given to us by Christ that produces joy suppose me to be in fear about the health of some dear friend well I say I should like to have my friend healthy but I want to feel safe about that friend I do not know anything about the state of my friend just now and I am uneasy now I tell you if I could get to feel easy then I would be convinced that my friend is well why you would justly reply there is no connection between the two things the proper mode of procedure is to find out whether your friend is well and then you will feel easy you say

I would believe I am saved if I felt happy is there any logic in that on the contrary first believe that you are saved and the happiness will follow you cannot believe that you are saved while you persist in doing what God does not tell you to do namely looking to your own joy and peace instead of

looking to the finished work of Jesus Christ Christian men are but men when they have a bad liver or an attack on bile this was written like 150 years ago or some trial and then they get depressed if they have ever so much grace I would defy the apostle Paul himself to help it and what then well then you can get joy and peace through believing I am the subject of depressions of spirit so fearful that I hope none of you ever gets to such extremes of wretchedness as I go to Charles Spurgeon struggled with depression his entire life despite being one of the most faithful men to preaching the gospel but I always go back again by this or I always get back again by this I know I trust Christ I have no reliance but in him if he falls I shall fall with him but if he does not I shall not because if he lives I shall live also and I spring to my legs again and fight with my depressions of spirit and my downcast soul and get the victory through it so may you do and so you must for there is no other way of escaping from it in your most depressed seasons you are to get joy and peace through believing now how does the Christian express their joy we know that they can find their joy in their faith in their belief in the gospel they know that they can be reassured of Jesus who he is who he says he is and what he has done in his word so now as the Christian how do we express that we express it in two ways so living out of the gospel is one expression of your joy and a partnership in the gospel so living out by the gospel or living out the gospel in your life turn to Philippians 4

[35 : 34] I'm going to read in verse 4 through 7 and this is Paul again reassuring the people of the faith that they have letting them know that they now get to live that out he says rejoice in the Lord always again I will say rejoice let your gentle spirit be known to all men the Lord is near be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known to God and the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus so not that they have Christ they should be rejoicing and he's telling them you should live that out lastly in the partnership of the gospel and this is ultimately what Paul is rejoicing in throughout the book of

Philippians is he's rejoicing in the partnership that he now has with the people of Philippians hearing that they are faithful to the gospel that he got to bring to them they've placed their faith and hope in Jesus Christ there are several different verses that identify this I'm just going to start from the very beginning and I'm going to read them to you you can write them down take a note Philippians 1 3-5 so this is in his introduction I thank my God and all my remembrance of you always offering prayer with joy in my every prayer for you all in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now Philippians 1-21 for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain but I am to live on in the flesh this will mean fruitful labor for me and I do not know which to choose but I am hard pressed from both directions having the desire to depart and be with Christ for that is far much better yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake convinced of this

I know that I will remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy in the faith so that your proud confidence in me may abound in Christ Jesus through my coming to you again so Paul's joy is made complete in knowing and partnering with people who desire to know Christ Philippians 2 1-5 therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ if there is any consolation of love if there is any fellowship of the spirit if any affection and compassion make my joy complete by being of the same mind maintaining the same love united in spirit intent on one purpose do nothing from selfish or empty conceit but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves do not merely look out for your own personal interests but also for the interests of others have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus his joy is made complete by those who are living like Christ Jesus by seeing their life lived out Philippians 2 29 receive him and he's talking about Epaphroditus a man that he's sending he may have sent this letter with him to the Philippians receive him then in the Lord with all joy and hold men like him in high regard because he came close to death for the work of Christ risking his life to complete what was deficient in your service to me in Philippians 4 1 therefore my beloved brethren whom I long to see my joy and crown in this way stand firm in the Lord my beloved again

Paul's joy is expressed in his partnership in the gospel with the Philippians we as believers our joy should be made it should be expressed it should be found in the compilation of partnership of the gospel and us gathering as believers not just on Sundays on Mondays through Fridays and Saturdays in our community groups in our discipleship groups all of these different things in your family for those who have Christian families that you get to go home to on the holidays rejoice and be glad in that find joy in that partnership that you have with them I'm going to read something you

don't have to turn here but this kind of I was reminded of this in reading through that climax of Atlas Shrugged and then I turned here the other day just to be reaffirmed at the absolute of Jesus Christ the truth the truth that Jesus Christ has come comes from 1 John 1-1 the introduction of John's epistle

I love reading John because he has to make it very clear that he witnessed the Christ in so many different ways he wasn't he wasn't some aberration he witnessed him in his person he saw his crucifixion and he saw his risen body walking and eating with him so he opens up in 1 John he said what was from the beginning what we have heard what we have seen with our eyes what we have looked at and touched with our hands concerning the word of life and the life was manifested and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested in us what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also so that you too may have fellowship with us again that's his partnership in the gospel and the believing of this and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ it is made complete in the Godhead now these things we write so that our joy may be made complete as John goes on to talk about what it means to be a believer in Christ if you say you're a believer then it will look like this if you're not then it will look like this but he finds his joy in expressing it to the people that Christ has come and they've they get to place their faith in him now and that he rejoices in that so let us as a people especially as we go into we continue on into the Advent season let us rejoice in the coming of Christ that he has come once that he died once that he was resurrected once and that he is coming again as Matthew talked about in Revelation like if you really want to see the second coming of Christ if you really want to find joy read the entire book of Revelation because that is something that you will some of you may not understand but you're going to see that there is joy to be had from the believer as Jesus comes again not going to read anything from there but I do highly encourage it so let me just close in prayer for us this morning thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you