

Our Eternal Joy In The World

John 17:9-16

Pastor Paul Anthes

Introduction: In His prayer to the Father Jesus reveals their plans for us here on the Earth. Jesus speaks of the spiritual blessings that He and the Father have purposed for their children WHILE THEY ARE LIVING ON THE EARTH! Many of us have been conditioned to hope for these things only after this life, but this is wrong thinking. It is unbiblical thinking. God gives Eternal Life to us when we are saved. Because only God is Eternal, Christ is giving you His pure, undiminished and Eternal life with an eternal purpose and meaning...AT THE TIME OF OUR SALVATION.

Eternal Life is God's doing just as surely as your physical life was the doing of your parents. We do not participate in our conception or our birth. God gives life. BUT...we are sinful and separated from God. How will we ever overcome this obstacle?

Jesus, the Eternal Son stepped directly from God, into Mary's womb and then lived a sinless life [on your behalf]. He then died a sinners death [on your behalf]. Jesus loves you in your weakness and sin the way a father has compassion and love for his struggling children. Let's read the next eight verses now....

John 17:9-16 ⁹ "I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me; for they are Yours; ¹⁰ and all things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine; and I have been glorified in them. ¹¹ "I am no longer in the world; and yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep them in Your name, *the name* which You have given Me, that they may be one even as *We are*. ¹² "While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled. ¹³ "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves. ¹⁴ "I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵ "I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

Jesus now prays about the kind of life God is giving. Millions trust Jesus for Eternal life with no knowledge of what that means now. The Prosperity Gospel has severely twisted what Jesus revealed in this prayer. Yes...the Eternal Life that God gives us is awesome and spiritually fulfilling, but it is lived in a world that opposes God and we are caught in that struggle. Without truth, Satan will always lie to us. Here Jesus prays for us as we live in this difficult world. Christ reveals that your present life and circumstances have eternal purpose that eclipses your mundane daily life. There is Joy to be had in this knowledge.

Jesus now speaks to the Father about overcoming Joy in the world. It is "overcoming" because it does not come from the world nor is it dependent on the world. It overcomes

the unfulfilling human life that all men have in this fallen and broken world. As Jesus prays we learn that.....

- Joy is a birthright of God's Children [9-10]
- Joy flourishes in loving unity [11-13]
- Joy comes through the Word of God [14-16]

Joy is a birthright of God's Children [9-10]

I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those whom You have given Me [9a]: There is a clear line of demarcation between those who belong to Him and those who do not. Not every human is a child of God. Children have received their life from their parents. Men receive their life from their parents who descend from Adam and Eve, who rebelled and lost their union with God. Human parents can only give human, temporary, earthly life. God gives Divine, Eternal life that spills over into Eternity. It starts when He brings us to faith in Christ.

John 1:4-13 ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men..... *to* as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

For they are Yours [9b]: Even though the Father has given you to Jesus you still belong to The Father. The Eternal Son and His Eternal Father are one in nature, purpose and possessions. The only distinction they make is this Father and Son relationship. But even in that, pains are taken for you to see their unity in all things. What the Father gives to the Son is still His because GOD OWNS ALL THINGS.

This truth defeats the temptation to let your possessions dominate you. Everything that God gives to you is still His because He owns everything in creation. I have been heard to pray...."Lord....your car is broken again." Our abilities, our families, our jobs, our money, our future....all God's. We are entrusted with it, but God cannot give away anything because He always owns everything. Rather than worry about your future needs, Jesus said to do this instead...

Matthew 6:33-34 ³³ "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

All things that are Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine [10a]: "Community property" is a term that describes property held equally and jointly by two people...usually in the marriage context. No one partner can say, "because I bought this item it is exclusively mine and not yours." In a happy marriage this is never even discussed, but when unity breaks down it is often a battleground.

The Father and the Son are in perfect, total unity. Both own everything in creation. Both created all things. Both purposed to send the Son into the world to become the sinless, sin bearer. They have shared ownership over all creation.

And I have been glorified in them [10b]: “I have been revealed or displayed in them.” I have been put on display in lowly believers. These children that the Father owned and gave to Christ, but still owns....have put The Eternal Son on display in the world. I’ll bet that you did not know that you have done this! You probably think some great preacher like Spurgeon or Billy Graham might have done it, but God is talking about all His Children. He is talking about you. Let me show you.

Paul told the Corinthians that we were blinded to God by Satan but suddenly we could see. How did that happen? What is the explanation we give? Would we seriously say we just decided that we wanted to see and....so we did!

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 ⁴ the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God..... ⁶ For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Everyone knows that you can not just decide to see when you are blind. Something has to happen to you to make you see. The Pharisee’s berated the man who Jesus healed from blindness and threw him out of the Synagogue. The man responded with this statement ...

John 9:32-33 ³² "Since the beginning of time it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. ³³ "If this man were not from God, He could do nothing."

Paul told the Ephesians that we are spiritually dead but now are alive. What is the explanation you give? That you knew you were dead so just decided to live and then did? No one can do that. God is the life giver. He has total control over physical life and He is just the same with Eternal Life in Christ. It is His to give not ours to take.

Ephesians 2:4-5 ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Speaking of himself Paul told Timothy...

1 Timothy 1:13-16 ¹³ I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor.....It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*. ¹⁶ Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.

God showed him grace and mercy so that He could demonstrate [put on display] His perfect patience by bringing an incorrigible, wicked, murderous blasphemer to love Christ with all His heart, and soul and strength.

Now here is a verse you should memorize. It will explain who you are, how you became a child of God and what God’s purpose is for you in the world.

Ephesians 1:5-6 ⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ **to the praise of the glory of His grace**, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

Joy flourishes in loving unity [11-13]

I am no longer in the world [11a]: Jesus is so close to the Cross now that He speaks in a present tense. He will no longer interact as a citizen of the world. He won't eat again or sleep again or experience human love and friendship again. All that is behind Him now and soon He will not even be on the planet any longer.

And yet they themselves are in the world, and I come to you [11b]: God has deliberately left the disciples behind because He has a purposeful mission for them. He is 'glorified in you.' Your salvation exalts Christ. Just the fact that God would make you alive and give you spiritual sight reveals who God is...How Glorious He is. You can and should participate in this by giving Him verbal praise for your salvation and His mercy to you. Leon Morris puts it this way...

"Just as it is His task to go out of the world, so it is their task to remain in the world."
Morris

Holy Father, keep them in Your name, the name which You have given Me, that they may be one even as We are. [11c]: The Father will guard you. Like a shepherd guards sheep from predators and poison food and water. The expression "in your name" means all that God is and does. Jesus does not pray that we would just be kept individually, but kept like a flock that belongs to God. Not just protected in the world, but protected for the purpose of giving glory to God.

The name which You have given Me: Again...What the Father has He has given to the Son.

That they may be one even as We are: Christ is passionate about our unity. We are not a collection of individuals who show up here for an hour a week and that is the end of it. We are in union with one another.

When we lived abroad, there was a community of expatriates in our city. We used to have Thanksgiving and do 4th of July together. We had a shared origin. We all belonged in the USA. We were just aliens in Italy. It bound us together in a unique way. Peter opens his first epistle this way...

1 Peter 1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen

If everyone of you had the same father and mother would you have a special unity when you were together? Of course. You would recognize that as what? Family! Brothers and Sisters!

Suppose eight children from eight different countries were all adopted by the same Father and Mother. Would they have unity? Of course they would. This is the illustration that strikes closest to home. We are all so different, but we have the same life giving parent. We have been sought out for it the way a parent goes to a far away land to find an orphan and make them their child. We therefore have a citizenship that we were not born with. Paul described it this way...

Philippians 3:20 ...our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ,

This unity on the earth as the local church. It is the place for the family. There is always room at the table for another adopted child. We stretch to accommodate them and we receive them with the love with which we ourselves were received. Satan opposes this vision of the church. He works tirelessly to make us dissatisfied with something in the church. The music, the leaders, the sermons, the refreshments, the facility, the nursery, the children, the old people, the temperature in the service, the location of the building. None of that should prevail because we are children of the same Father.

While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have given Me [12a]: Jesus kept the flock together while He was with them. With Christ gone His children need another provision for their unity. You may think that you are fine on your own, but God says differently.

I guarded them and not one of them perished, but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled [12b]: Again....Judas was not acting outside the plans of God. God has His purposes for the wicked in the world. They are not out of control as they so often appear to be.

But now I come to You [13a]: Jesus is relinquishing His role as the Shepherd of God's children in the world. He is praying for The Father to care for His children left behind.

These things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves [13b]: This is why Christ has preached and taught. Our ultimate happiness or Joy will be in heaven with Christ, but it is not true that there is no joy in this world! When Christians are joyless it is for a few reasons:

They do not know how God has loved them and sought them out for salvation. They think they just stumbled into something. They cured their own blindness or raised themselves from the dead or caused their own conception and birth. Nothing to be joyful about there. There is however, Great Joy in knowing that you have been loved, sought, bought, adopted, clothed, fed and made a child of God.

They have never realized that their salvation glorifies God. It puts His surpassing love and mercy for sinners on display for the world. For our loved ones to see and wonder about. Sinner who should be eternally lost, but are rescued by Christ....by their mere presence in the world....Glorify the God of Grace and Mercy!

They do not know or believe that the difficult circumstances of their lives are purposeful. Trials draw our hearts to God and there we find Joy and Peace. We find neither in the

circumstances of this world. Because good circumstances may change at any moment. If you lay awake worrying about life you cannot enter into Joy. God's purposes never change toward you. You are His child and you reflect....like any child....the nature, character and love of the father.

Jesus confides in the Father that the purpose of His teachings are to impart a deep, abiding and Eternal Joy....the very Joy of the Godhead to you. If you want to be happy in this world you should consider a passionate pursuit of Christ and all the things He taught. He told the Father that is why He spoke to you.

Joy comes through the Word of God [14-17]

I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world [14]: The world detests the thought of living your life based on what God tells you. Christ was the consummate spokesman for God. As the Eternal Son He came speaking the very Words of God. God speaking to men directly. The only reason that unbelievers do not hate more is because they are becoming so ignorant of what God says and commands. When they do clearly hear some of it they react with rejection and malice. The world's war against creation has been a constant reminder in the past. The world's war against the image of God revealed in heterosexual marriage promises to be even more intense.

I do not ask You to take them out of the world [15a]: Do you think that there are any prayers that Christ would ask that the Father would not answer. Of course not! Do not waste your emotional and spiritual energy bemoaning the state of our culture or the course of our nation. DO NOT pray or say all the time how anxious you are to die or have the Lord return so that you can get out of here. This is not God's will for your life.

But to keep them from the evil one.[15b]: The world hates the thoughts that proceed from God. They reject the character and nature of God. They reject the image of God and prefer that humanity slithered up out of primordial slime. They do not want to be like God.

And make no mistake about this....Satan is the driving force behind all this hate. He is the original "God hater." He went immediately after Adam and Eve because they had "GOD" written all over them. They were purposefully created by God and were given the God's breath of life. They bore His Image and are like no other beings in Creation.

Satan is still defacing the image of God today by sin and through godless education, godless science and godless culture. It is a war on who **God** is. It is not a war on you or Christianity. The world cannot do anything to harm Christ. He went back to heaven. It is Christ they hate, but they are only able to show their contempt to His children....to us! God the Father is guarding us from Satan so that he cannot do what he would love to do. You should also pray for protection when you pray, but always rest in this...

1 John 4:4 ⁴ You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world [16]: You are no more a part of this world's mentality and values than Christ Jesus is. Nevertheless, you are in the world so that your redeemed life will bring Glory to Christ and the Father. That makes your life infinitely valuable.

Sanctify them in the truth: This entire prayer gives the proper meaning to the word "sanctify." What do you think of when you hear this word? Holiness? Obedience? Being strong in the Lord?

Would it surprise you to know that the first day you were saved you were already fully sanctified. 100% ! That is the basic meaning of the term. To be set apart for a special purpose. God has taken you out of the Satan's lie and put you into God's truth. The truth is what God says because God is the source of all truth. God made reality and what He says about it is true. You are set apart in the world to believe and know the truth.

It does not mean sinless...although it will lead to that when we finally get to heaven. It does not mean being strong although God makes us stronger as we live with Him and trust Him. The Holy Spirit changes our inner man. It does not mean obedience, but it leads to willing obedience. Obeying, being strong and being holy will not sanctify you. But...because God sanctifies you, He will make you more obedient, stronger and less sinful. How will He do it??

Your word is truth: The 66 books of the Old and New Testament contain the truth that we can objectively use to know what is true about God, Creation and Humanity. If you desire more obedience, more holiness...if you want to be stronger as a man or woman or young person you need the Word of God. You need to hear it, read it, think about it and live in it. Jesus' prayer for you was that God would sanctify you through the Word of God.

CONCLUSION: As Jesus prayed to the Father He revealed that He and the Father had given us Eternal Life while we were still living in a finite world. It is totally His doing and we are in awe of it. God is motivated by love and mercy, He is full of Grace. We did not deserve it but we certainly needed it.

But Jesus has also prayed for us because He intended for us to stay on the earth while He went back to heaven. We are frontline witnesses for the Truth of the Universe. The fact that God would save the likes of us testifies to His eternal grace and mercy. It reveals who God really is. IT GLORIFIES HIM!

Jesus preached so that we might enter into the same Joy that He has. Perfect undiminished joy. It is an attribute of God. Contrary to what Satan tells the world...God is not perpetually angry. God is not mean. God is not a cosmic killjoy! God does want you to be happy but not to be religious! In spite of all those lies, Christ says that He is joyous and delighted. This Joy He gives freely to those who treasure Him above all other things in Creation.

God wants you to pursue Him in the Word because it will bring you into the fullness of Joy that your heart craves. It is right for you to want it. You have God's permission to go for it with a passion. Only...look for it where it is to be found. In Jesus, who is to be

known in the Word of God. Peter...for all his weakness, failures and sins found it...He wrote about it....

1 Peter 1:3-8 ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our 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, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷ 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; ⁸ 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,