

# Defiant Joy!

## In the Midst of Emotional Turmoil

### Welcome & Call to worship:

*"I pray that you would be energized with all his explosive power from the realm of his magnificent glory, filling you with great hope. <sup>12</sup> Your hearts can soar with joyful gratitude when you think of how God made you worthy to receive the glorious inheritance freely given to us by living in the light. <sup>13</sup> He has rescued us completely from the rule of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son. <sup>14</sup> For in Jesus all our sins are cancelled, and we have redemption through his very blood." (Col. 1:11-14)*

Even though we are separated by physical distance, we are united through our faith in Jesus.

- When we consider the rapid changes of this past week. Once again, we are deeply disturbed and maybe even distressed.
- Each of us perceive, interpret and respond to the current crisis in different ways.
- You will respond differently than the person next to you.

- It's not necessarily an issue of faith either. It's more an issue of personality.
- We're all made differently, and therefore, we will perceive, interpret and respond differently to any given situation.
- God made you the way you are, and God loves you the way you are. You don't have to change, pretend, ignore or deny your responses.
- God knows and God cares about what is happening within you:
- Uncertainty, loneliness, fear, worry, frustration, sadness, disappointment, all seem to cycle through one after the other, or even several at a time.
- We don't always have control over how we respond: doing some gardening, see a big brown snake – you don't choose how to respond, the reaction is automatic.
- We can't always choose what emotions we're feeling, we simply feel them as they are present.
- What we do have is control over is what we do with our emotions.
- **Sadness** tells a story of having lost something that's of incredible value – so let the tears flow.
- **Frustration** says that we are unable to have or do something we desire

- **Loneliness** is the cry of the heart to fulfill our God given capacity for authentic community.
- **Fear** indicates that there may be very real danger ahead, therefore, we must exercise caution.
- **Worry** is our human attempt to control an outcome we have no control over.
- **Uncertainty** exposes what we are most insecure about.
- None of these emotions feel great, but they are actually a gift, because every time they emerge, they invite us to call upon God and experience the comfort of His presence.

### **Prayer:**

Lord in the stillness of this moment we acknowledge all the many and varied emotions that flood our soul like a river that's burst its banks.

We name the things of great value that we have lost...

We confess the frustrations of not being able to have and do the things we desire...

We notice the emptiness as our heart cries out for authentic connection with others...

We name our current insecurity and vulnerability, regarding our health, our finances, our families...

We recognize the very real danger ahead and notice our absolute powerlessness over those things we want to control...

Lord we confess that in the chaos of this season at times we've lost sight of you and we've allowed ourselves to be overwhelmed by our own despair, or the despair of others – and so we ask that you forgive us.

Holy Spirit, come and fill us and open the eyes of our hearts to see you in the midst of our miry clay. Lord, place our feet upon a rock and put a new song in our heart – a hymn of praise to you our God, so that many will see and know and put their trust in you. (Ps. 40)

Lord you are faithful and the only thing that is new with you is your mercy each morning – and so we declare, 'great is your faithfulness'. Thank you for the joy of knowing you, the comfort of being held by you, and the peace of being reconciled to you. Amen

**Affirmation:**

God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, not holding our human frailty against us but embracing it with love and with power. Therefore, in Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit we are forgiven, restored and renewed. Halleluiah!

**Notices:** Communion – set aside bread and juice, table/cloth, cup/s, or order juice and bread from Lesley-Anne, individual communion

serves. Prayer requests, private chats, catch up b4 and after service. Singing...

### **Sermon:**

- We've spent some time earlier acknowledging our emotions – they are what they are. We don't need to deny or ignore them or pretend that we're all good. We accept our emotions as a gift and an opportunity to press into God.
- Our emotional wellbeing isn't necessarily connected to our faith. We can have strong faith and still experience a variety of emotional ups and downs.
- Jesus did, he's familiar with every human emotion – anguish, uncertainty, frustration, sadness, loneliness... and it wasn't a reflection of his lack of faith, it was an indication of his humanity.
- Not only did he embrace it fully, but He received it as a gift to propel Him to cry out to God.

Weeping at the tomb of Lazarus – He cried out to God.

- God is no stranger to challenging emotions. God gets it and is with us while we're going through it.

- Today is not preaching a sermon on a particular passage, but I'll be teaching on a theme.
- I want to look at how we can honour our emotional turmoil **while** positioning ourselves in defiant joy! We can have both.
- The phrase 'Defiant Joy' sounds strange and even seems incompatible.
- Defiance is associated with disobedience, rebellion, and stubbornness.
- A defiant person is known to refuse to give into the pressure to conform to expectations. Now, when you have a defiant child, or student at school, or colleague in the workplace – it's not great, there are rules, expectations and guidelines for a reason. So, defiance defiantly has a negative connotation to it.
- Joy, however, is delightful. It's a pleasurable emotion that lifts us up – joy at the birth of a new child; the joy of being with family friends; the joy of hearing the voice of God speak into your heart.
- A joyful person is known to be bubbly, happy, laughing – we love being around joyful people, their joy is infectious (maybe infectious is a poor choice of words).
- Holding rebellious, stubborn, defiance, together with delightful, pleasurable joy doesn't seem to fit. Perhaps two positive

adjectives, or two negative adjectives together, but not 1 negative and 1 positive.

- Considering Defiant Joy is a challenge for us.
- To help us understand this further, we'll look at a biblical understanding of Joy:

**Christian joy is a good feeling in the soul, produced by the Holy Spirit, as He reveals the beauty of Christ in the Scriptures; in us; and in the world.**

*“Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*

*<sup>17</sup> For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh.... the fruit of the Spirit is love, **joy**, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness and self-control.” (Galatians 5:16-17; 22-23)*

- First and foremost, joy is the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. It's not something we can generate ourselves.
- Happiness might be a personal response to an experience. Happiness is something we can generate by doing things that we enjoy – gardening, craft, cooking...
- But joy is produced through the person and work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life that points us to Christ.
- And this is how the Spirit work's in us to bring forth joy:

*"I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. <sup>13</sup> But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. <sup>14</sup> He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. <sup>15</sup> All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."* (John 16:12-15)

- The Holy Spirit produces joy in the believer's heart by revealing the beauty of Jesus and His work.
- The Spirit points us towards Jesus at work in the scriptures, in our own life, and in the world – when we see this and when we notice this, when we get a revelation of Jesus we are filled with joy!

How Jesus explains this:

<sup>44</sup> *"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his **joy** went and sold all he had and bought that field."* (Matthew 13:44)

- This parable indicates that a revelation of the Kingdom of God (which is initiated and established in Jesus), produces great joy. And in this situation the person sold everything in order to gain



access to it – it was his highest priority and greatest pleasure and treasure.

- Having a fresh revelation of Jesus produces joy in our hearts.

An example from Scripture – Mary Visits Elizabeth:

*<sup>39</sup> “At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, <sup>40</sup> where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear! <sup>43</sup> But why am I so favoured, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for **joy**.”*

(Luke 1:39-44)

- This story helps us to see the connection between being filled with the Holy Spirit – the Holy Spirit revealing to both Elizabeth and the baby in her womb, (John the Baptist) Jesus, and... producing joy.
- Even an unborn child leaped at the revelation of Jesus.

Amy...

- It is the Holy Spirit who stirs our hearts to notice Jesus at work in scripture, in our own life, and in the world – this is what produces Joy.

- Joy is not the product of our own efforts by doing pleasurable things.
- Joy is the work of the Holy Spirit.
- That's why it's Defiant Joy. It's not about us or our emotional health and wellbeing, it's about God and His work in us and in others.
- Defiant Joy isn't dependant upon us, it's dependent upon God – and that's why it refuses to bend under the pressure of external chaos.
- Defiant Joy rebels against the cares of the world.
- Defiant Joy disobeys fleshly desires.
- Because Defiant Joy is bigger than and greater than any earthly or fleshly power.
- Nothing can bend or shift it. It is God at work in us reminding us that while we might have trouble in this world, Jesus has overcome the world. (John 16:33)
- So let us cry out for a fresh revelation of Jesus, so that our hearts might explode with joy!
- Defiant Joy can co-exist with human emotion. It's not one or the other, it is both/and.
- We can honour what we're feeling – fear, frustration, worry, loneliness, uncertainty, sadness...and have Defiant Joy.

- I am fearful, I have uncertainty about the future and how it will affect me, I have huge concern for those who have lost work and livelihoods, but I also have joy because each day I read the scriptures and discover a new, something of God that brings joy to my heart.
- I know God is light and life and God is at work bringing light and life into all darkness and chaos.
- I'm not denying my emotional turmoil. I'm holding it alongside of Joy. Joy that refuses to be extinguished because it is produced and nourished by the Holy Spirit leading me, guiding me, showing me Jesus day after day after day!
- In this season of heightened emotions may you cry out the Holy Spirit for a fresh revelation of Jesus, and like John in the womb may you leap for joy in his presence!

### **Prayer:**

Leaders – government, health, sports, media, arts, business, education, religion.

Lost jobs – businesses, families, organizations.

Vulnerable – elderly, disabled, mental health challenges, family violence...

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