

Sunday, August 13, 2017

Forest Hills United Methodist Church

Message: "Living Filled with Joy"

Rev. Dr. David Werner

Message Series: The Holy Spirit in Daily Life

Scripture: Ephesians 1:11-14

Text: Acts 13:52 "Because of the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the disciples were overflowing with joy." (CEB)

Blurb: God created you for life. But not just mere existing. You were created for full life, life abundant, rich, and overflowing. God's plan for your life is driven by the Holy Spirit He has given within you. This Sunday we open the promise of God, given in the Holy Spirit, that you were made for amazing life!

Gathering Song: *Days of Elijah*

Welcome: -Pastor David

Greeting One Another

Worship Set: Sanctify

The Same Love

No Longer Slaves

Sweet Hour of Prayer

Worship Prayer - Andrew

Kids invited to Kids' Church

Prayer Time: Andrew

New Members: Michael, Jennifer Berglund and son, Matthew

Faith Sharing Video: Angie Prchel

Offering: *Holy Spirit, Love Divine* -Sanctify

Sermon Bumper

Message: "Living Filled with Joy"

PP#1: Living Filled with Joy

“Because of the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the disciples were overflowing with joy.” -Acts 13:52 (CEB)

The Holy Spirit in Daily Life. Living Filled with Joy. Acts 13:52 “Because of the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the disciples were overflowing with joy.”

PP#2: Image for “one of those days” or bad day, or everything going wrong days.

What do you do at the end of a rough day? You know, when one thing after another goes wrong? Work is irritating, the coworker pushes your buttons, the server went down right when you needed it most. You spilled coffee on your papers. Traffic was worse than usual. You were out of milk at home, and so you had to stop for that, and you ended up behind some lady whose credit card was denied...three times. In the parking lot you see a new dent in your bumper. Then you get the news that your debit card’s been hacked. What a day. All you want to do is go home and hide, right?

Or there are those longer struggles: fighting cancer, or facing surgery, or unemployment, the failing health of someone close to you, serious car problems, caretaking for a loved one, finances getting worse, month after month no matter how frugal you try to be.

Someone here at church a while back made me laugh. Can’t remember who it was, though. But he said to me, “The Lord must think pretty highly of me. He promises to never give us more than we can handle. Well, The Lord seems to think I can handle quite a bit lately!”

I took great comfort this past week reading about the great and wonderful Paul in the Bible, who really had a rotten day. It’s in Acts 13. Paul has just started on his very first missionary journey across Turkey. He starts out all excited. After all, Jesus had so dramatically called him and sent him out as a missionary. Jesus spoke to him, directly, in a flash of light. Paul was traveling with a good friend and a veteran missionary, Barnabas. And also John Mark, most likely the writer of the Gospel of Mark and Peter’s friend. Their home church in Antioch had prayed over them and sent them out in blessing. They expected great things!

PP#3: Map of Paul & Barnabas’ first missionary journey, especially fr Antioch to Pisidian Antioch.

Their first stop was the island of Cyprus. They started preaching, and were even invited to speak to the governor. The governor’s magician, however, opposed them. But Paul called down judgement on him and shut him up. Exciting! God is in the house! Off to a great start.

They get to Perga, and suddenly John Mark bails out. He deserts them and heads back home. Oh well, he was young. They travel north to Pisidian Antioch, and Paul is invited to preach in the synagogue! Wow! Invited! Paul gives them all he’s got (16-41). He starts from the Jewish Scriptures and shows how Jesus is the fulfillment and Savior. He then tells them, “He’s for you! Will you receive His forgiveness?”

Crickets. It’s a lot to take in. So, they politely ask Paul to come back again next week and try again...I mean, preach again. They needed some time to think it over, and they wanted to hear more about this strange message.

OK, Paul decides to take it positively. Another opportunity...invited back!

Verse 44, next week, the place is packed out. It seems like everyone has come to hear. Wow! Praise the Lord! God is on the move! This is what Paul signed up for.

But then, right when things get started, some of the Jews cause problems. They start heckling,

and shouting, challenging Paul and drowning him out.

It's so bad that Paul finds it pointless trying to convince them. Verse 46, Paul and Barnabas give up on the Jews, and declare that they will target the Gentiles, and preach to them. The Gentiles were happy, but the Jews weren't done yet. They use their secret weapon, the most cunning and effective tactic of all time.

PP#4: Acts 13:50-52 (CEB)

50 However, the Jews provoked the prominent women among the Gentile God-worshippers, as well as the city's leaders. They instigated others to harass Paul and Barnabas, and threw them out of their district.

Verse 50: they get the women of the city leaders to harass their husbands and prevent them from listening to Paul. It was extremely effective! In fact, the city leaders grabbed Paul and Barnabas and threw them out of the city! The great Paul, the greatest missionary team of all time, powered by God's Holy Spirit, on a mission for Jesus, thrown out on their ear because of the challenge of women.

PP#5: Acts 13:50-52 (CEB)

50 However, the Jews provoked the prominent women among the Gentile God-worshippers, as well as the city's leaders. They instigated others to harass Paul and Barnabas, and threw them out of their district.

51 Paul and Barnabas shook the dust from their feet and went to Iconium.

Paul knew he was finished. Verse 51, "Paul and Barnabas shook the dust from their feet and went to Iconium."

What a rotten day! It had started off so well. But how quickly it all turned against them. They gave up and left.

What do you do at the end of a difficult day?

This past Thursday some of us met as a small group. Most of us had some form of a rotten day. But we gathered together, ate a meal, and talked. God's presence filled all of us. And even though I forgot to serve dessert, we all finished uplifted and blessed. Our day ended well, anyway.

You see, our joy, our peace, doesn't come from what happens during the day. It comes from God's presence with us. You know what it says in verse 52? Verse 51 was "Paul and Barnabas shook the dust from their feet and went to Iconium." Defeat.

PP#6: Acts 13:50-52 (CEB)

50 However, the Jews provoked the prominent women among the Gentile God-worshippers, as well as the city's leaders. They instigated others to harass Paul and Barnabas, and threw them out of their district.

51 Paul and Barnabas shook the dust from their feet and went to Iconium.

52 Because of the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the disciples were overflowing with happiness.

But verse 52 says, "Because of the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, the disciples were overflowing with joy."

See? There is the secret! Even at the end of a rotten day, even when everything went wrong, even when they didn't see God's work succeed. They still had overflowing joy. That joy didn't come

from what they did, or what they went through “out there” in their lives. That joy came from inside, an internal source. It came from the Holy Spirit that lived within them: the same Spirit of God that we have, that we get inside us when we choose to follow Jesus. We walk daily with the Holy Spirit, and it renews our joy, day by day, even when we don’t see God very well.

PP#7: Living Filled with Joy

1. The Holy Spirit gives inner joy

Romans 14:17-18 “For the kingdom of God is ... righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit”

Later, when Paul is writing to the Christians in Rome about Jewish food laws, he writes Romans 14:17-18, “For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.”

Joy in the Spirit. True joy, lasting, abiding and steadfast through all the ups and downs.

I saw this, for real, when I was young, in a way that still anchors me to this day. I was perhaps eight. My mother got the call that her mother was dying. She had bone cancer, and it had spread. We had to go. We traveled from North Dakota to Ohio. I remember going to the hospice room, standing outside the door. Mom, do you remember this? The door was slightly ajar, and I could see my grandmother her in bed through the crack. She was writhing in pain, and low moans drifted out. Forty years ago they weren’t able to manage pain as well as they can, now. We paused for a moment, and mom gathered herself. Then she said, “Ok, let’s go in.”

We went in through the door, and I’ll never forget it. My grandmother’s face, so wrinkled and grey with pain, lit up when she saw us. She murmured hoarsely, “What a great day this is! How the Lord has blessed me today and let me see my family again before I die. Thank you, Jesus!”

Wow! Here she was, lying in such great pain, waiting to die, and yet she had a joy that came from the inside. The Holy Spirit, who was living in her heart, and who had carried her through so much (the depression, losing their home, being homeless, and now cancer), through all that, God had always carried her, and now, transformed even her darkest hour. I remember my grandmother as a lover of Jesus, and a woman filled with *joy*.

It was the testimony of my ailing grandmother, in that hospice room, that showed me how real God’s joy was. That’s what I wanted for my life. And to this day, her dying testimony still holds me fast to Jesus. “For the kingdom of God is ... righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit!”

PP#8: Living Filled with Joy

1. The Holy Spirit gives inner joy

2. The Holy Spirit guides you in all truth

John 16:13 Jesus said, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth.”

Another way the Holy Spirit gives joy, is that the job of the Spirit inside of us—and this is why the Holy Spirit was given to live inside us—is to bring clarity around what is really, really true. When we live by the voices of this world, we get so confused. There are so many. So God puts His Spirit within us to teach us, to confirm in us, to give us that prompting, to what is true. This most often happens when you read the Bible, and all of a sudden, something jumps out at you. This is why it is the inspired Word of God. The Holy Spirit uses Scripture to confirm to us the truth of what we

need to know, and notice right now. When you are praying through something, it's not just mentioning it, and letting it go. Prayer is more than that. It is an opening of ourselves to hear God. Lord, what should I do about my son or daughter? He's drifting. He's getting bad friends. Then, you need to spend time in God's Word. And all of a sudden, when you are reading your devotions, it will hit you like a ton of bricks. That's the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes people tell me, "Pastor, your sermon was aimed right at me." Um, actually, it wasn't. I wish I were that good! But that was the Holy Spirit. You have been praying through something, and the Holy Spirit guided you in that truth, right there.

We have joy in the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit teaches us the truths we need to know for our salvation, but also for our lives, today!

PP#9: Living Filled with Joy

1. The Holy Spirit gives inner joy
2. The Holy Spirit guides you in all truth
3. The Holy Spirit will bring to mind what you need to know

John 14:26 "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you."

We are filled with joy also because the Holy Spirit reminds us what we need to know in the moment. I have been praying to become more generous with my money. My goal is to be giving away 20 percent of our income. Not quite there yet. But the other day, a lady called for some help. It was a lady who was making poor choices and had no hope of improvement. I knew I couldn't give her church monies. But then, the Holy Spirit prompted my heart: "Here is a chance for you to let go of some of your own money. I know how it irritates you to seemingly waste money on what will not do any good. Here is a chance for you to practice giving up your money with no hope of return." That was my issue. The Holy Spirit reminds us of what we need to know.

PP#10: Living Filled with Joy

1. The Holy Spirit gives inner joy
2. The Holy Spirit guides you in all truth
3. The Holy Spirit will bring to mind what you need to know
4. The Holy Spirit grows good fruit out of us

Galatians 5:22-23 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control."

One more. We are filled with joy, because the Holy Spirit in us, grows good fruit out of us. We call them the fruit of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings out these fruit as our behaviors: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." The more we live these out, the more joyful our lives are. This is the very best, most self-fulfilling and self-rewarding way to live. This is not just about the people we touch. When we live more like this, we have more joy ourselves! Life is good.

As we come to the end of our summer series on the Holy Spirit, with all that we learned, and with all the more that we can discover about the Holy Spirit, I want to make sure you know about the incredible joy we have when we walk with the Holy Spirit in daily life. The word "gospel" means "good news." It is good. It is blessing. It is joy.

God created all of us to have the joy of the Lord in our hearts. This is for you! When you

accept Jesus into your life, you are given the Holy Spirit. When you invite Jesus into your heart, you are born again by the Holy Spirit. And even before you invite Jesus in, you have the Holy Spirit working from the outside, urging you to give Him a try.

PP#11: Ephesians 1:11-14 (CEB)

11 We have also received an inheritance in Christ. We were destined by the plan of God, who accomplishes everything according to His design. ... 13 You too heard the word of truth in Christ, which is the good news of your salvation. You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit because you believed in Christ. 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance, which is applied toward our redemption as God's own people, resulting in the honor of God's glory.

Ephesians 1. Paul again here is writing about the joy he experienced, the joy that was still there on his rotten days. He writes, verse 11, "We have also received an inheritance in Christ. [This is what we get when we take Jesus.] We were destined by the plan of God, who accomplishes everything according to His design. ... 13 You too heard the word of truth in Christ, which is the good news of your salvation. [It's good news! Here comes the joy!] You were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit because you believed in Christ. [The Holy Spirit within you is your assurance that you indeed belong to God!] 14 The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance [there's more to come, so much more, ahead!], which is applied toward our redemption as God's own people, resulting in the honor of God's glory." Why? Why is God so good to us, and do this for us? It's not because we deserve it. It's because of God's own glory. It's because of who God is!

PP#12: The Holy Spirit in Daily Life *generic slide*.

We have been created and chosen by God the Father. We have been forgiven and redeemed by God the Son. When we choose this Jesus, we are filled, from the inside out, with God the Holy Spirit. So, as we end this summer message series on the amazing Holy Spirit, I want to offer one more chance for all of us to invite the Holy Spirit into our hearts. If you've been thinking about this and feel now is the time, invite Jesus into your heart, and you will receive the Holy Spirit. If you have been living with Jesus, and there's a part of you that you struggle to surrender to the Holy Spirit, now is the time to do that, too. The Holy Spirit, in our daily lives. Right now, right here.

Our closing song is "There is joy in the Lord. There is love in His Spirit. There is hope in the knowledge of Him. There's a fountain that flows, Like a river from heaven, Abounding in love to my soul." As we sing, I invite anyone who wishes to come over to the front pews where members of the prayer team are. We will pray with you, if you want. Or, you can make this a prayer, right where you are, in your own heart.

Open your heart to the Holy Spirit. There is joy for you. No matter your day, how hard it may be, this joy will carry you! And then, it can be said of you, "Because of the abundant presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives, they were overflowing with joy."

Amen.

Closing Song: *There Is Joy in the Lord* -Sanctify

Benediction: Pastor David