

July 4, 2010; 6 Pentecost C
Grace and Glory Lutheran Church; Pastor Ken Albright
Text: Luke 10:1-11, 16-20
Theme: The Second Fruit of the Spirit--Joy

Today we explore the second fruit of the Spirit. Joy.
We see that joy in Jesus' followers in the story in the Gospel today.

What are the components of this joy?

If we were to take it apart and dissect it like a high school student with a scalpel in science lab—what would we find?

What is it that makes this joy hold together?

Martin Luther, in his commentary on the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians says:
“God has sent his son, not to oppress us with heaviness and sorrow, but to cheer up our souls in him.”

We see in this story that Jesus doesn't want his followers getting wrapped up in the minor setbacks or advances. He is inviting them to see the future as he sees it.

How easy it is for us to get fed up and frustrated and to lose our joy when it seems that we encounter a setback.

These things can really sidetrack us send us spiraling into sorrowful thoughts.

Jesus makes it clear to his followers that when they go out there in the world as his representatives, they are going to see all manner of human activity. The ups and the downs. The acceptance and the rejection. The welcomers and the wolves.

The key seems to be not to get wrapped up in the rejections.
Not to be sorrowful and sit around and sulk about the setbacks, but to keep steadfast with the message that God has come near, to keep on healing those who are open to healing.

What setbacks have you faced this week?
In your work? With your health? A family fiasco?
Have you allowed them to rob your joy—your confidence that despite the forward steps or the backward steps, Jesus is active and doing something great?

When the seventy come back and give their report, it says they are filled with JOY. They are thrilled. Demonic forces submitted to them. Jesus himself said: ***“I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.”*** This is understood to mean that which he observed every time a demon possessed person was healed.

You see—Jesus didn't want them to be discouraged and sorrowful when something didn't happen here, or they encountered a road block over there, because in reality—there was something greater going on--the whole new age had begun.

See, their message is the same one Jesus has been delivering:
“The kingdom of God has come near you.”

The joy Jesus knows, and the Joy he encourages in his followers, is a joy over the new day that has dawned in him.

It is a new day. A new age.

A new era...and what happens in one frame of the entire shoot isn't going to alter that reality one bit.

Jesus is still near—even when people protest your presence. Even when peace is not shared when you extend your hand.

As we look at the inner dimensions of joy, we also see that ***what drives it is a positive picture of reality.***

Jesus looks out ahead and sees a plentiful harvest. A harvest that is so heavy it demands more laborers.

There is a sense of over-abundance. A sense of urgency. It is here...it is at hand. I need your help to get it in!!!

Have you noticed in the Gospels, that when Jesus is around, there is always more than enough? There is always an abundance. There are challenges left and right, for sure. The road blocks are all over. And yet the resources to meet those challenges are always able to be called up to meet the need.

Think about it:

Nets are full to breaking with brim when Jesus tells where to throw them.

People are coming out of the woodwork for healing when Jesus enters a home.

Jesus sees reality: a joyful reality, in which everyone is INCLUDED.

In which everyone's names are written in heaven—

Unless and until they insist by their own ill will that they don't want to have their name on the VIP list.

I wonder—what kind of reality are you and I seeing in the world in which we live?

Do we picture for other people a vision that includes them?
Do we envision a future and call people to join it that is exciting?

By seeing the way we interact in our office chair, or at a restaurant table, or at a gas station counter

Would others look at us and say: That person is a joyful person?
That person is a hospitable person?

Jesus' welcome of us is the source of everlasting joy.
Rejoice, people of God. Your names are written in heaven.
Rejoice. And go and tell others: Jesus is coming to center court, to

And you're in. You're name is on the list. Come and join us for the celebration.

In Jesus' name.
Amen