

RECAP

After spending time in prayer together last week and listening for how you can be actively advancing the cause, were you able to take any actions steps? **What did those steps look like for you?**

IDEA 1

How do you define joy?

Brian described joy not as the absence of sorrow, but instead joy is experiencing and delighting in the grace of God in the midst of sorrow. Joy is leaning toward the steadfast eternal promises of God. In our broken world, joy is resistance; it is an act of protest.

What do you think of that definition? Do you agree, why or why not?

IDEA 2

Jesus experienced sorrow, but He was also the most joyful person to ever walk the earth. Thomas Goodwin said, “Christ’s own joy, comfort, happiness, and glory are increased and enlarged by His showing grace and mercy, in pardoning, relieving, and comforting His members here on earth.” What he is saying is the joy and happiness of Jesus are increased by us bringing Him our faults and failures so we can receive grace and forgiveness. Jesus is joyful when we come to Him in confession and repentance.

Do you typically connect confession and repentance with bringing Jesus joy? How would your view of confession and repentance shift if you approached it with the perspective of bringing Jesus joy?

His heart is not drained by our coming to Him. His heart is filled up all the more by our coming to Him. The forgiveness of Jesus is infinite. Brian used the illustration of a toddler with a messy diaper.

How did that picture help demonstrate God’s heart for you?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Jesus is joyful when we confess because it's His own body is being healed. Jesus came for our salvation, for our restoration, for our sanctification. He came to unbind us from the things that have us tied up. He doesn't just tolerate us, He loves us with an everlasting love and finds joy in our freedom.

What would you like to say to Jesus in response to this truth?

Spend some time quietly responding to Jesus—in confession, repentance, and thanksgiving.

Leaders:

- You may want to play some music and have some paper and pens available so people can enter into the process.
- Depending on your group, you could open it up for anyone who would like to share their experience, but always give the freedom to pass as well.

NEXT STEPS

Brian gave us some practical next steps:

- **Pray and ask Holy Spirit to be filled with the joy of Jesus.**
- **Find a person you know who has unspeakable joy and ask them to pray for you.**
- **Keep coming to Jesus with your brokenness in confession and repentance.**
- **Stay focused—joy fades when we lose focus. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Remember Hebrews 12 and the race set before us.**