

Joy?

Scripture used: [Hebrews 12:1-3](#)

OVERVIEW

This week, Pastor Hurmon introduced our new sermon series. Inspired by Kay Warren's book, [Choose Joy](#), written in the wake of her adult son's suicide, and a [Forum Episode](#) on KQED that examined "the role of joy during times of crisis," PH will take us on a practical exploration to find, unlock, experience, and choose joy. This series will culminate on Easter Sunday, a most joy-filled day! In this first message, we answer the question of whether joy is even possible in the face of such difficult present circumstances.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Find Jesus.** Despite her circumstances, Kay Warren writes, "Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in all things." Notice that "God" is the common denominator in all three of Warren's affirmation. If we want to find joy, we must find Jesus. Pastor Hurmon used the story of Jesus's first miracle to illustrate this point ([John 2](#)). Mary, mother of Jesus, instructs the servants to do whatever Jesus tells them. And Jesus demonstrates he is able to take the common, everyday things of life and transform them into a source of surpassing joy (i.e., water into the finest of wine). We too must find Jesus and obey his instructions to have joy flow through us.
- 2) **Follow Jesus.** The author of the letter to the Hebrews refers to Jesus as the pioneer and perfecter of faith. We need to find Jesus both at the banquet and at the cross. Jesus shows us how to endure suffering, extraordinary pain, and extreme injustice ([Hebrews 12:2b](#)). We can fix our eyes on Jesus just as Jesus fixed his eyes on the joy awaiting him on the other side of death.
- 3) **Be informed and encouraged by Jesus.** Both the author of the letter to the Hebrews and Paul, in his letter to the Romans, point to Jesus as our model. ([Romans 8:18](#).) Jesus had faith in his destiny, in taking his proper place in the throne room of God, and that future joy was something that he could lay hold of even in difficult circumstances on the way to the cross. We too can rest in this assurance that God is working on our behalf, saving the best for last, with a future joy that cannot be taken away!

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Begin with a general check in about the distinction between happiness and joy. Pastor Hurmon described happiness as a feeling based on circumstances, whereas joy is an attitude that defies circumstances. How do you understand the difference between happiness and joy? What has your pandemic experience been like in light of these ideas? How has joy been present or absent in your life over the past year?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Read and meditate on [Hebrews 12:1-3](#) along with [Romans 8:22-28](#). How do these scriptures speak to you?
 - a. Share stories of when you, your ancestors, or your loved ones have endured hardship for the sake of a future joy.
 - b. How might these stories and scriptures encourage us as we face our daily challenges?
 - c. Why would God choose to become human and to suffer in a broken world as we do? ([1 Peter 2:21](#).)
 - d. What might Jesus's miracles of changing water into wine or his death and resurrection reveal about the character God?
- 3) **DO** - Pastor Hurmon ended with a challenge to begin each day with "Good morning Jesus" for the next ten days based on [this story](#) by Father Gary Caster. Invite joy into your heart by paying attention to the ordinary blessings that surround us every day. Identify someone with whom you will share your ten day experiences. Join us next Sunday as we continue in our series, "Choose Joy!"

AN IMPORTANT NOTE: Pastor reminded us that connecting with God requires caring for our mental health. He encourages us to seek out treatment for [depression](#) from health professionals rather than to try to get better by ourselves. [Click here](#) for some resources to get started.