The Lost Joy of the Lord

Introduction:
Lost things. 1) Lost Presence, 2) Lost Passion, 3) Lost Whisper, 4) Lost Power, 5) Lost Promises
Things misplaced. Things forgotten. Things neglected, robbed, broken or ruined.
(ie) Peter Pan lost marbles (misplaced!) **Tootles** says he has "lost his marbles," had forgotten how to fly and which are actually his happy thoughts.

The Lord wants your lost things to be found. He wants it to be restored. He is the restorer.
This morning we are talking about 6) LOST JOY. – *7) Lost People, 8) Lost Shepherds.*

1) What Is Real Joy and Where Do We Get It?

The Bible has a lot to say about joy. It is often contrasted against the trivial world-view of happiness, fun, winning and alcoholic celebrations. Christian joy is closely aligned with peace. Jesus said, *"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you, not as the world gives, let not your hearts be troubled."* John 14:27

*"I have told you this so that **my joy** may be in you, and that **your joy** may be full."* (John 15:11) *"I am coming to you, Father…so that they may have the full measure of **my joy** within them."* (John 17:13) and again, Jesus assured his disciples, *"I will see you again, and you heart will **rejoice**, and **your joy** no man will take from you."* (John 16:22)

Peter said, *"Whom having not seen, you love; and though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with **joy unspeakable** and full of glory."* (1 Peter 1:7)

Isaiah speaks of everlasting joy in Isaiah 35:10, 51:11, and 61:7. *"The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and **everlasting joy** shall be upon their heads."*

Jude 1:24-25 concludes with a benediction, *"Now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with **exceeding joy**, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen."*

The word **rejoice** is often used throughout the Bible to indicate we ought to stir up the joy that is within us.

*"**Rejoice** in the Lord always, and again I say, **Rejoice**!"* Heaven is a place of fullness of joy, but the Scripture also says, "*The angels **rejoice** over one sinner who repents."* (Luke 15:10) We are told by Jesus to *"**rejoice** that our names are written in heaven."* (Luke 10:20)

2) How We Lose Our Joy?

Throughout the Bible we also see that believers, the children of God, can lose their joy. They don't lose their salvation, but they lose the joy of that salvation. There are often many earthly events that cause a believer to lose their joy, (Self-pity, circumstances, accidents, injuries, losses, sickness, persecution, deaths)

(ie) Lost Joy Personified – personalities that lose joy

- Sesame Street - **Grouch Oscar** – nothing is right
- Winnie the Pooh, **Eeyore**, every sunshine has a cloud – perpetual gloom and melancholy
- Al Capp Li'l Abner Comic strip: **Joe Btfsplk**, the world's worst jinx, had a perpetually dark rain cloud over his head;

Biblical People Who Lost Their Joy

- Cain's attitude - anger countenance
- King Saul – anger, hatred, murder
- David's uncofessed sin - cover up
- Jeremiah depression - God forgot me
- Elijah paranoia - nobody loves me
- Job's injustice - justice trap – it's not fair!!!
- Habakkuk's depression – hope in the end – Hab 3:17-18
- **Apostle Paul's difference** – 2 Corinthians 11:23-30

2 Corinthians 11:23-30

Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24 Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26 I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27 I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28 Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? 30 If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness.

Present Day Overcomers!

Philippians 4:4-13

- Nick Vjicic, Vu-Jis-ik – no arms or legs
- Joni Eareckson Tada- paralyzed – paint, preach, write, speak
- David Ring – Baptist evangelist with cerebral palsy
- Dan McDoo – disease robbed of health, speech, etc. – artist, evangelist

Quitters - Fatalists – pouters and doubters

Joan Didion - the Year of Magical Thinking "His eye is NOT on the sparrow" --

Reddit Testimony

After a lifetime in Christianity, including over 30 years as a pastor, I am in the process of abandoning Jesus. Rather than bore you with a myriad of reasons, I'll give just one-**I've realized His eye is NOT on the sparrow, and He isn't watching me.** He's simply not there. Never was. Not as I watched His people grapple with sickness, poverty, divorce, and death. Not as I was abused. Not when I was betrayed. Not when I was abandoned. Not as I've given almost everything to "Him" and received nothing but heartache in return. It's not that I'm angry at God because how can I be angry at someone who doesn't exist and can't possibly know me or my situation? No, the anger is tied to a wasted life in which I gave "Him" credit for everything good while I took the blame for everything bad. It's tied to a childhood culture that devalued my worth, telling me I was inherently fallen and evil. That I could only find redemption by denying myself happiness and giving everything to God (the church). Jesus supposedly suffered for a few days. I've suffered for decades.

All because I believed He was there, watching, listening, caring. Truth is, the help I've provided, money I've given, and love I shared stems from some sort of goodness in me-not God. If there is to be any saving, any justice, any healing in my life, it's up to me. Why? There's no god watching, and no god to care. "His eye is not on the sparrow."

3) How Can We Restore Our Joy?

- Repent! Admit you've lost you joy.
- Remember! Remember where you lost it.
- Rejoice! Your name is written in heaven! "For the Joy set before him"
- Review your blessings. Name them one by one.

Application: Some joy practices:
Smile, Sing a Song, Read Scripture, and Review a promise each day

Rejoice! Stir up your joy. Stillness – leaves falling, sunset, sunrise, cup of coffee or tea, visit a friend who makes you laugh.