

ActNow! (Applying Christ's Teaching NOW) follows the weekly sermon series of TPMC, and challenges us to apply and put into practice the biblical truths we hear each week. It is the recommended Bible discussion material for TPMC's Connect Groups, and leader's notes are available to all Connect Group Leaders and at the Information Counter.

5 MARKS OF A METHODIST (2): REJOICES IN GOD

Nehemiah 8:10; Philippians 4:4

Rev Ming Feong Ching

SERMON SYNOPSIS

- John Wesley described the distinguishing mark of a Methodist as *"a life deeply transformed by the love of God."* These are simply the marks of Christian discipleship, characterized by one who rejoices in God (Philippians 4:4; Nehemiah 8:10). In an emotionally exhausted world, rejoicing can feel unrealistic. However, Christian joy is not an insincere happy face or the denial of pain; it is a steady confidence anchored in the unchangeable faithfulness & love of God.
- **(I) Joy Flows from Abiding** ~ Joy naturally flows from a relationship with God with a knowing that we are deeply loved by Him personally. In John 15:9-11, Jesus Christ instructs us to abide in His love that our joy may be full. When we rely on endless ministry activity & busyness *for God* as the source of our joy rather than being *with God*, our soul dries up. *True joy begins by returning to God's presence.*
- **(II) Joy In Hard Seasons** ~ During a violent storm at sea, John Wesley witnessed Moravian Christians calmly singing hymns. Their deep inner peace and lack of fear left a lasting mark on him. This exemplifies the command to "Rejoice in the Lord always" (Philippians 4:4). While circumstances like health, and finances constantly change, Jesus Christ does not. *Joy remains even in difficult times. Christian Joy is not the absence of suffering, but the presence of God within suffering, making God Himself the true joy of our hearts.*
- **(III) Coming Back to Wonder Again** ~ According to Romans 5:11, Christian joy is rooted in the cross where we as sinners, received reconciliation with God. *We rejoice because grace is real*, yet faith can easily become mechanical when the wonder of the gospel fades. Echoing David's prayer in Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation," we must never become numbed towards God's grace demonstrated at the cross. When we can personally proclaim, "I am forgiven... I am loved... I belong to Christ," this joy anchored in Christ will shape the way we live & our witness to all around us. *The Cross remains the source of our joy.*
- **(IV) A Joyful Church in an Anxious World** ~ The church is called to bear witness — not with fake positivity, but with deep, Christ-rooted joy. When people encounter believers who possess peace in hardship and gratitude in uncertainty, it quietly witnesses Christ Jesus. *We rejoice not because life is easy but because grace is real.* Joy flows from abiding in Christ. His invitation to us is not merely to survive the storm, but to root us so deeply that even when circumstances change, our souls learn to rejoice in the Lord. Carrying this deep joy in Christ, we become the witnesses whom Christ calls us to be. When Christ becomes our joy, and joy becomes our strength, the world will begin to see that *Jesus Christ truly is enough.*

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

RELATE

1. Think of a situation in the past week when you experienced genuine Christian joy even when your circumstances were difficult, stressful, or disappointing. Share what that situation was, and what made that joy clearly different from mere temporary happiness.

REFLECT

2. "Christian joy is about where our hearts are anchored. It is that steady confidence that even when the circumstances of life change, Christ remains faithful, present, and enough." Reflecting on the sermon, how do the Scripture Texts below help you know God more deeply & personally, and encounter Him in the midst of hardship with joy?

[Verses to help us go deeper: 1 Peter 1:3-9; James 1:2-4]

RESPOND

3. "A joyful disciple strengthens the whole church, and a joyful church becomes a powerful witness to the world". Share with your CG how will you *intentionally grow* in being a joyful disciple – Eg. Abide in Jesus' love; Rejoice in God despite of circumstances; Going back to the cross & wonder again; Become a witness to someone else through your joy in Christ... etc.

PRAYER POINTERS

- Praise God for His infinite wisdom, abundant grace, amazing love and enduring faithfulness.
- Thank God for His unchanging steadfastness & graciously being the Anchor for our souls – the One whom we can trust even when everything else shifts.
- Pray that as a CG & each one in TPMC to be rooted deeply in Christ so that amid life's storms, we will rejoice in Him, and we will be a witness to the world for the glory of God through our Christ-centered joy.

SCRIPTURE TO MEDITATE ON

"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! [Philippians 4:7 NKJV]