



# Always Joyful!

Luke 11:9-13 Romans 5:1-11 Psalm 136

November 24, 2024

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Have you ever been in a situation where you're taking pictures and you've been smiling so long that you start to feel it in your face?!! It's like the “*smile muscles*” all start to ache at the same time! If you are not sure what I'm talking about, then just try this: *smile and keep on smiling through the whole sermon!!*

We usually associate a smile with happiness. Smiling is a natural thing that seems easy at first, but it is harder than it sounds. Researchers have identified 18 different kinds of smiles; using many of your facial muscles. For most people, after you smile continually for a while, you will start to feel all those muscles!

Doesn't that describe the nature of **happiness**<sup>1</sup>? You just can't keep it going on and on forever. Like a smile, happiness only lasts for a short time: “**happ**iness” is based on what “**happ**ens” in your life. As soon as your circumstances change, your happiness can be taken away!

**HAPPINESS** is dependent on your circumstances.  
**JOY**<sup>2</sup>, on the other hand, is dependent on God.

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<sup>1</sup> The word "happiness" comes from the Old Norse root word hap, which means "chance, luck, fortune, or fate". "Happens" comes from the same root; hence, "happiness" is based on what "happens."

<sup>2</sup> Joy springs up from many areas in the Christian life, including "confidence in God's love," "peace in God's promises," "contentment in God's care," "hope in eternal life," and "contentment and thankfulness." Joy is always focused on God and His Word; objective truth that leads to a joyful heart and glad rejoicing!

**Joy** is the gladness, contentment, cheerfulness, and delight that comes from knowing and trusting God in all things.

**Joy** lifts you up and over your circumstances, so you can focus on God and His promises.

- That is why you can be **Joyful** even in the midst of difficulties;
- and that is why **Joy** goes way beyond a smile and happiness.

A smile may last a few minutes,  
happiness may last a few days,  
**but Joy is meant to last a lifetime.**

**Joy** is one of the **Fruit of the Holy Spirit** that God works in and through you as you grow and mature in the faith. It is not something that you have to work at, or muster up within yourself. It is not “positive thinking.” **Joy** is not a command someone tells you to perform<sup>3</sup>! **Joy** is not a work that you do; but a gift that the Holy Spirit gives through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>4</sup>!

**Joy** is trusting God at all times and through all things!

**Joy** is knowing that you belong to the Lord and live under His care!

**Joy** is believing your sins are forgiven and that you have peace with God!

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him Romans 15:13

The joy of the Lord is your strength! Nehemiah 8:10

Rejoice in the Lord always, again I say rejoice! Philippians 4:4

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<sup>3</sup> “If you, dear reader, are anything like me, you recoil at the tiniest whiff of compulsion, of a forced and coerced approach to joy. For Pete’s sake, if I lack joy — and we all do in one way or another — someone telling me to be more joyful is about as joy-inducing as a dental drill!” “About Joy,” by Rev. Matthew C. Harrison, President of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Lutheran Witness, February 3, 2012

<sup>4</sup> As is the case with so much in errant protestant Christianity, those groups that focus on man and his work also turn joy into a work of man; something you have to struggle with to create within yourself. And if you can't create it within yourself, then your faith is not strong enough. **That is a false teaching.** Joy is not dependent on you and your effort or strength; joy is a gift of salvation and a fruit of the Holy Spirit! It is God's work within you as He continually reveals His love, care, kindness, forgiveness, and compassion for you at all times and through all things. In response, the Spirit leads you to rejoice in those things! **THAT’S JOY!**

**Joy** begins with faith. **Joy** springs from knowing and believing that you are reconciled with God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. Your sins have been removed from you by the Son of God, you are forgiven and righteous in God's eyes, and you live at peace with God with the sure and certain hope of eternal life. All the blessings of salvation, all the gifts that Jesus has earned for you, are freely given to you. They are yours. **It's an objective reality and truth.** This is the gospel promise in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit works so that when you hear that promise you **believe** it. You **know** that it's true, and that you are included. You **want** and **desire** these gifts that God has given to you. **That want, that desire, is faith.** Everything God promised you in the Lord Jesus Christ is given to you through faith. God loves you He freely and graciously makes these great promises to you!

**Joy** springs up from that Gospel good news!

**Joy** is the Holy Spirit created response to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>5</sup>!

We rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation!" Romans 5:11

Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!  
Psalms 32:11

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23

This week gives us an occasion to **Rejoice in Joy!**

It's **THANKSGIVING** week!

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<sup>5</sup> "Joy goes far beyond a smile and happiness; whereas a smile is outward, Joy is inward; whereas happiness is based on what happens to you, Joy is centered on God regardless of what happens to you. Happiness is an emotional response to your circumstances; Joy is a state of mind and steady spirit regardless of your circumstances." From an unknown source © This quote highlights the objective nature of joy, as opposed to the subjective nature of happiness.

It's a time when we specifically remember that *everything we are and everything we have* is a gift from God's good hands to us. It's a time when we remember and celebrate that God faithfully provides our **DAILY BREAD** *day in and day out*: everything we need to support this body and life. Here's how we teach it and confess it in the Small Catechism:

**What is meant by Daily Bread?**

Everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a godly spouse, godly children, godly servants, godly and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.

"Fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer," Martin Luther's Small Catechism

In response to God's abundant generosity to us, we can say the words of the Psalmist as if they are our very own:

*He gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.*

*Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.* Psalm 136:25-26

*O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endures for ever.* Psalm 136:1

Be sure that *Thanksgiving* does not slip by you so fast this week that you fail to be truly thankful to the Lord your God. Perhaps make some dedicated time for yourself and with your family to think about all of your blessings, *maybe even make a list*, and thank the Lord for His goodness, kindness, and generosity. Thanksgiving is a time to remember the blessings of the Lord, and when you do, that feeling you have: that is joy filling your heart!

If you've been smiling through this entire sermon, you can stop now! I bet you can feel those smile muscles in your face!

*Thankfully, we never have to stop being Joyful!* God's promises are always in effect in your life. We live every single day in **Joy**, rejoicing in our God, His Promises, and His never ending love for us! Amen!

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**Holy Spirit,**  
**we ask that you work through the Word**  
**and promises of Jesus**  
**to create a deep and lasting joy in our**  
**hearts**  
**as we live as your people.**  
**Allow our hearts to rejoice**  
**in the gifts of salvation**  
**and the abundant physical blessings**  
**that you so freely shower upon us.**  
**Teach us to be thankful,**  
**to rejoice in you,**  
**and to live with joy each day.**  
**We ask this in Jesus Name**  
**and for the glory of our Father in**  
**Heaven,**  
**Amen!**

## Luke 11:9-13

[Jesus said,] “So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.<sup>10</sup> For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

<sup>11</sup> “Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?<sup>12</sup> Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion?<sup>13</sup> If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

## Romans 5:1-11

**1** Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ, **2** through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. **3** Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; **4** perseverance, character; and character, hope. **5** And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. **6** You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. **7** Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. **8** But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. **9** Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! **10** For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! **11** Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our LORD Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

# Psalm 136

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>2</sup> Give thanks to the God of gods.

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>3</sup> Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>4</sup> to him who alone does great wonders,

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>5</sup> who by his understanding made the heavens,

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>6</sup> who spread out the earth upon the waters,

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>7</sup> who made the great lights—

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>8</sup> the sun to govern the day,

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>9</sup> the moon and stars to govern the night;

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>10</sup> to him who struck down the firstborn of Egypt

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>11</sup> and brought Israel out from among them

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>12</sup> with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>13</sup> to him who divided the Red Sea asunder

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>14</sup> and brought Israel through the midst of it,

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>15</sup> but swept Pharaoh and his army into the Red Sea;

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>16</sup> to him who led his people through the wilderness;

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>17</sup> to him who struck down great kings,

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>21</sup> and gave their land as an inheritance,

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>22</sup> an inheritance to his servant Israel.

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>23</sup> He remembered us in our low estate

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>24</sup> and freed us from our enemies.

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>25</sup> He gives food to every creature.

***His love endures forever.***

<sup>26</sup> Give thanks to the God of heaven.

***His love endures forever.***