

Devotion: Choosing Joy

Psalm 16

Devotion to God is a daily choice for greater joy.

Sermon Outline

I. Introduction: The Fullness of Joy

God has hardwired us for joy, and deep down, we have a designed longing for happiness. The problem is not our desire to be happy, but rather that we walk past our Creator and look to lesser, created things to satisfy what God alone can satisfy. Choosing worldly pleasures over the feast God has prepared for us is an insult to Him, much like choosing a bowl of Froot Loops over a carefully prepared, home-cooked meal. God's glory and our happiness are not competing; He is honored most when we find our deepest satisfaction in Him, which is why scripture repeatedly commands us to delight ourselves in Him (John 15:11; 1 Peter). From this perspective, devotion to God is a daily choice for greater joy.

II. Two Paths

Modern marketing algorithms regularly put a specific vision of the good life before us – safety, significance, and satisfaction – and it shapes the direction of our lives. David also had to choose who would define his ultimate good. There are two paths we can walk. On the first path, we run after other gods and put our hope in worldly idols – like our bank accounts, careers, and screens – thinking they will provide the good life we crave. On the second path, we trust God as our Lord and refuge, letting Him define the Good Life, and resting in the truth that we have no good apart from Him (Psalm 16:1-4). We must honestly evaluate our screen time, calendars, and bank statements to see if our culture or our Creator is shaping our vision of the good life.

III. Two Outcomes

Ignoring God's warnings to pursue our own path inevitably leads to destruction, just like a child ignoring a parent's warning and getting hurt. When we forsake God as the fountain of living waters to dig our own broken cisterns, our souls are left weary and thirsty (Jeremiah 2:12-13). Running after worldly idols only multiplies our sorrows, resulting in guilt, regret, emptiness, and eternal separation from God. However, when we choose God as our portion and inheritance, our boundary lines fall in pleasant places, resulting in deep, unshakeable satisfaction (Psalm 16:5-6). Walking with God leads to fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore (Psalm 16:11).

IV. One Choice

We must make a choice about which path we will devote ourselves to, much like Joshua challenged the Israelites (Joshua 24:15). That choice is made not simply by forcing ourselves to stop loving the world; as Thomas Chalmers explained, we must expel that old love by replacing it with a superior affection for God. Saints throughout history have had to make this choice. Moses chose mistreatment with God's people over the fleeting pleasures of sin because he looked by faith to a greater reward (Hebrews 11:24). Similarly, Augustine found freedom from

earthly lusts only after tasting a sovereign joy in God that was sweeter than all earthly pleasure. In both cases, they didn't merely say no to sin, but yes to a greater joy.

V. Application: Fight for Joy

The world, the flesh, and the Devil are trying to sell us on a lesser view of the Good Life.

Devotion, therefore, is a daily fight for joy. Spiritual disciplines, community, confession, and other practices help us to continually remind our souls that the feast Jesus offers is far better than anything the world offers. Joni Eareckson Tada exemplifies this, choosing joy in the midst of severe physical suffering and viewing her pain as an opportunity to increase her capacity for God. Whatever you are going through, fight to believe that what Jesus offers is greater than anything this world has.

Fight for joy church, today, tomorrow, and the next day, and God will be glorified.