

John 15:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

Analysis

Jesus reveals His purpose in teaching these things: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you' (tauta lelaleka hymin hina he chara he eme en hymin me). Christ's own joy (he chara he eme) is to remain (meno) in believers. This joy is not circumstantial happiness but the deep satisfaction that exists in the Father-Son relationship. Jesus desires to share His own joy with disciples. The second purpose: 'and that your joy might be full' (kai he chara hymon plerothe). The verb pleroo means to fill completely, to fulfill. Christian joy is not manufactured emotion but participation in Christ's own joy - the joy of abiding in the Father's love, bearing fruit, and fulfilling divine purpose. This verse counters perceptions of Christianity as joyless duty. Obedience, far from diminishing joy, fulfills it.

Historical Context

Early Christian joy was remarkable in pagan world - believers faced persecution with inexplicable gladness. Pliny's letter to Trajan noted Christians sang hymns to Christ 'as to a god.' This verse explained their joy - not circumstantial optimism but sharing Christ's own deep satisfaction. Church Fathers like Athanasius taught that incarnation's purpose was making humans partakers of divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), which included divine joy. Medieval mystics sought contemplative joy in God's presence. Reformation emphasized joy as fruit of justified status - no longer condemned, believers rejoice. Puritan spirituality sometimes appeared joyless, yet writers like Richard Baxter extolled 'saints' everlasting rest.' Modern psychology's

pursuit of happiness finds ultimate fulfillment here - not self-generated but received through abiding in Christ. This verse challenges both hedonistic pleasure-seeking and grim dutiful religion.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What is the nature of Christ's joy that He desires to share with believers - how does it differ from human happiness?
2. How does obedience to Christ's commands lead to fullness of joy rather than diminishing freedom and pleasure?

Interlinear Text

Ταῦτα	λελάληκα	ὑμῖν	ἵνα	ἡ	χαρὰ	ἡ	ἐμὴ	ἐν
These things	have I spoken	unto you	that	G3588	joy	G3588	my	in
G5023	G2980	G5213	G2443		G5479		G1699	G1722
ὑμῖν	μεῖνῃ,	καὶ	ἡ	χαρὰ	ὑμῶν	πληρωθῇ		
unto you	might remain	and	G3588	joy	that your	might be full		
G5213	G3306	G2532		G5479	G5216	G4137		

Additional Cross-References

John 17:13 (Parallel theme): And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Romans 15:13 (Parallel theme): Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

John 16:24 (Parallel theme): Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

1 John 1:4 (Parallel theme): And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

1 Peter 1:8 (Parallel theme): Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

John 16:33 (Parallel theme): These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

2 John 1:12 (Parallel theme): Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full.

2 Corinthians 1:24 (Parallel theme): Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Luke 15:9 (Parallel theme): And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

Luke 15:32 (Parallel theme): It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.