WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 1

WHAT IS THE CHIEF END OF MAN?

To Glorify God and EnJOY Him forever.

HISTORY OF ADVENT CANDLES

- HOPE
- PEACE
- JOY
- LOVE



HISTORY OF ADVENT CANDLES

- Name derived from the Latin word “Adventus” = arrival or coming
- 16th century Lutheran tradition of candle lighting before Christmas
- 19th century northern European tradition of wreath and named candles
- Celebration of a season of expectation at the coming of the Messiah Savior Jesus





WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORD "JOY"?

Popular definition: personal and cultural context

Biblical definition: what do the Scriptures say about joy?

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE WORD "JOY"?

Positive personal experience, feeling or emotion
Shared positive experience, celebration
May be related to circumstances and/or relationships

Synonyms might include
- happiness, gladness
- pleasure, gratification
- elation, ecstasy, euphoria
- jubilance, merriment

What is the relationship between "our treasures" and our joy?

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

Psalm 16:11

"You have made known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of JOY; at your right hand are pleasures forever more."

- *Heb "simchah": festive shared or inner delight in the Lord's favor*



WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

Luke 2:10-12

"And in the same region there were shepherds, out in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great JOY that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior."

- *Gk "chara": profound rejoicing that springs from spiritual realities rather than external circumstances.*
- *The "Joy candle" is sometimes referred to the "Shepherd's candle"*



WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

John 10:10

"… I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

- *Jesus came to justify and reconcile us to God AND to give us abundant life.*

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

John 15:11

"I have told you this so that my JOY may be in you and that your JOY may be complete."

- *Jesus brought and is the Good News of salvation with the specific intent to give us His joy.*

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

Colossians 3:1-4

"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are from above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory."

- *The central reality of our existence as followers of Christ is the we have died and have been raised with Him. Our life and identity is now with and in Him.*

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

1 Peter 1:8-9

"Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious JOY."

- *Joy is a gift from God we are "filled with" (given, not self-produced) because we are in a love and trust relationship with Jesus.*

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

John 17:13, 20-23

"But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my JOY fulfilled in themselves…"

"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me."

- *Jesus promises to give us His joy because He has brought us into the same intimate relationship (oneness) He enjoys with the Father.*

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

Galatians 5:22-25

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, patience, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit."

- *Joy is one of many manifestations of our indwelling by the Holy Spirit of God, with Whom we live (walk through) our lives.*

WHAT DO THE SCRIPTURES SAY ABOUT JOY?

JAMES 1:2-4

"Count it all JOY, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing."

- In Christ we WILL encounter very difficult circumstances which will test our faith and may produce many negative emotions. This is the normal Christian life, completely under God's control.
- In Christ we trust Him to be sovereign over all circumstances, use them for His glory and produce in us steadfast faith and abundant life in Him. Trials are an opportunity for joy in Jesus alone.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT JOY FROM THIS SEASON OF ANTICIPATION OF THE SAVIOR?

- The good news of the Gospel is great joy because God Himself has come to save His people.
- Jesus came to save AND give abundant life, including joy.
- Jesus tells us He gives us His joy and the promise of complete joy.
- The central reality for us as followers of Christ is that we have died and our life is hidden with Christ in God. Our life and identity is now with and in Him.
- This joy is a gift from God we are "filled with" (given, not self-produced) because we are in a love and trust relationship with Jesus.
- Jesus promises to give us His joy because He has brought us into the same intimate relationship (oneness) He enjoys with the Father. This is our incredible joy!
- Joy is one of many manifestations of our indwelling by the Holy Spirit, with Whom we "walk through" our lives.
- In Christ we trust Him to be sovereign over all circumstances, use them for His glory and produce in us steadfast faith and abundant life in Him. Trials are opportunities for joy in Jesus alone.