



OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

THRIVING AMID THE THREATS
THRIVING WHEN IT'S THRILLING
JANUARY 15-21, 2017

SERMON OUTLINE

Thriving When It's Thrilling Acts 2:42-47

What did the thrill of New Life produce?

1. A Passionate commitment (v.42)
2. An Emotional experience (v.43)
3. A Compassionate community (v.44-45)
4. An Attractive joy (v.46-47)

The thrill of New Life sets the Foundation we will Build on when the thrill is Gone

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

We can be joyful because our God is for us!

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. What is the last thing someone did for you that brought you a great deal of joy?
How did you respond? Who did you tell?
2. Think about that one act again. What difference did it make as you went through your day or week to know that someone loved you that much?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Leader: Joy is one of life's greatest feelings, but the reality of life in a broken world is that joy is often hard to come by. Sometimes we run into circumstances that we may have never imagined or predicted the week or even the day before. People in your group may even be having a hard time thinking of a recent time when they felt joyful. Yet in spite of anything that may come our way, followers of Jesus can find joy in all circumstances because we have a God who is for us, a truth we need to remind ourselves of daily. Acts 2:42-47, which we studied on Sunday, is a portrait of what happens when the joy of salvation takes root in people's lives. Today we will take a look at Paul's description of how our salvation should make us feel.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:31-32.](#)

3. What does it mean to you to read that God is for you? If you are “for” someone or something, what does that entail?

4. When did you first understand what Jesus did for you, and how did that change you? Have 1 or 2 people share examples.

Leader: That God is for us is one of the most important statements Paul could make. God loves us, and He has demonstrated His love for us by bringing us into a relationship with Himself through the salvation we find in Jesus. That God will grant us everything because of Christ means our blessings now and in the future are limitless. One of the reasons we can find joy in our salvation is because God is on our side.

5. Paul wrote that God through Jesus, will “graciously give us all things.” The believers in Acts 2 were filled with joy because they realized all that God had given them. Brainstorm together and create a list of the things that God has graciously given you, and how you might serve one another with some of those gifts. Consider splitting up into pairs or smaller groups to discuss.

Leader: Acts 2:42-47 reveals that God blesses us in material and spiritual ways. Your group's list may include anything from family and career, to fellowship, ministry passions, or salvation itself.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:33-34.](#)

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

6. Read Romans 8:1. What do verses 8:31-34 reveal as the reason why “there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus”? Why is this good news?

7. How does this truth make you feel? What should be different about the way we live in light of this truth?

Leader: Give your group a few minutes to process question 7. We talk often about salvation, but we rarely take the time to process what Jesus did for us and how we are changed by His act. The joy of salvation is the forgiveness of sins and abiding relationship with Jesus we now enjoy. Instead of condemning us for our sins, Jesus did the unthinkable. He died on a cross for them. His sacrifice means believers are free from condemnation. Additionally, Christ has the position of authority at the right hand of God; He uses that position as He intercedes for us. He does not condemn us. Because God has gone to such great lengths to secure our relationship with Him, we should not let anything we face in this world shake our faith.

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 8:35-39.

8. Everything God has done for us is motivated by His love. What in verses 35-39 is the most encouraging evidence of God’s love to you?

Leader: Paul affirmed that nothing has the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. The list of potential separators includes physical danger, spiritual beings, present and future occurrences, and powers above us and below us. To clearly indicate that absolutely no thing or person can come between the Lord and His people, Paul concluded his list with “anything else in all creation.” Absolutely nothing can come between us and our Lord. Nothing can remove us from His family. Therein lies the joy of our salvation.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

9. What evidence of God’s love do you see in your day-to-day life?

10. Joy is a group endeavor. What are a few small ways we can remember to take joy in all the different ways that God is at work in our lives and through our church?

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11. The love of God motivated the first believers to live passionately for God. What difference does trusting in God's love for you make as you think about living with gospel joy and intentionality in everyday life?

PRAYER

Praise God for the incredible gift of joy that He has given to you in Christ. Ask that as you go about your life you would remember all the things that God has done for you and allow them to motivate you to live with both joy and urgency.

MEMORIZE

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. — Romans 8:38-39

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

ROMANS 8:31-39

8:31-32. Beginning in verse 31, there are five critical questions asked by the apostle that lend a sub-structure to the entire final section of verses 31-39. The first two questions deal with precedent:

Question 1: If God is for us, who is against us? This question is a good theoretical one, but certainly a practical one for Christians living in Rome in the first century. Paul's heart was to see the believers in Rome partner with him to launch a missionary effort into Spain and the regions beyond. How successful could one man, even all the believers in one city, be in such an undertaking, especially in light of combustible Roman opposition? In light of the verses Paul has just written, it would seem clear that those whom God intends to save will be saved, the opposition of humankind notwithstanding. Since salvation turns on the will of God, not the will of man, opposition to God from the human realm is not really an issue.

Question 2: He did not even spare His own Son but offered Him up for us all; how will He not also with Him grant us everything? It seems hard to deny the background of the Abraham and Isaac story here as a model for Paul's argument (Gen. 22:1-19). Because Abraham did not withhold his son, his only son, Isaac, God blessed him with everything else that he could be blessed with. The logical argument in that scenario could also have been Paul's prompting: it is illogical to conceive that God would give His most treasured "possession"—His only Son—to secure the salvation of sinners, and then not also give all else that is necessary to bring that salvation to completion. The precedents God has already established—by demonstrating in Paul and the believers in Rome

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

that no one can thwart his salvific ends, and by giving the best he had to give—provide good reason for believers to rest in God's protection. Precedent is critical in any legal setting, but Paul's next two questions deal with the legal standing of believers before God.

8:33-34. Question 3: Who can bring an accusation against God's elect? This question is raised as a defense of what Paul taught in Romans 3:21–5:21 concerning justification—the legal position of believers before God. All have sinned, all fall short of the glory of God, but all (who believe) are justified freely by God's grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. As the judge, God was perfectly just in paying the penalty for and declaring “free to go” the unjust (Rom. 3:23-26). As a result, no charge can be brought against those whom God has chosen (foreknown, predestined, called, justified, and glorified).

Question 4: Who is the one who condemns? If no charge can be brought against the elect of God, then certainly no condemnation can be brought against them either. Again, Paul is summarizing what he has taught previously: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” because of having been set free through Jesus Christ from the law which condemns us from our sin (Rom. 8:1-2). Continuing the legal motif which insures our freedom from charges and condemnation, believers have their own divine advocate who continually defends them before the bar of heavenly justice (1 John 2:1; Heb. 4:14-16).

8:35-36. Question 5: Who can separate us from the love of Christ? In this final section, Paul asks his final question in the first verse of the section and answers it in the last: What can separate the believer from God's love (v. 35)? Nothing can separate the believer from God's love (v. 39). Paul quotes from Psalm 44:22 to demonstrate that there will always be opposition to God's people and the work of God in the world. The world is cursed; it is an antagonistic environment; it is under the control of the evil one (1 John 5:19). There will be many natural and supernatural attempts made to convince the believer that he or she has been separated from the love of God.

8:37. Paul reflected upon the words of the psalmist (in Ps. 44:22), which he found so appropriate to his situation. The troubles to be faced by the Christian are nothing new but have always been the experience of God's people. At every moment of the day we face death. We are considered no better than sheep that are marked for slaughter. Nevertheless in all these difficult situations we are winning an overwhelming victory through the one who has proven his love for us. It is the love of Christ that supports and enables the believer to face adversity and to conquer it.

8:38-39. The final two verses of chapter 8 call for reflection rather than for interpretation. They supply the climax of Paul's inspired and eloquent words of praise to the love of God. The apostle voiced his confidence that there is nothing that could separate us from the love of God that comes to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. His list of ten terms moves from physical danger through the hierarchy of superhuman powers, those that now exist or ever will, powers from on high or from below, and culminates in the inclusive phrase any other created thing. There is absolutely nothing that can ever drive a wedge between the children of God and their Heavenly Father. It is true that life contains its full share of hardships (v. 18). But God is at work in all the circumstances of life to conform those whom He has chosen into the likeness of His dear Son. The process is God's. We are His workmanship (Eph 2:10). The process of sanctification is intended to bring us into conformity with the nature of our Creator. Although it may at times involve some serious pruning (John 15:2; cf. Heb 12:5-11), we may be sure that love is at work on our behalf. We are forever united with the one who is perfect love.