

Joy and Praise and Worship

As C. S. Lewis so profoundly points out in his book Reflections on the Psalms, "all enjoyment spontaneously flows into praise".

Lovers praise their beloved, readers praise their favourite book, food-lovers their dish of choice, and people celebrate the wonders of creation. You see, we love to praise the things we enjoy because praise is not just the expression of that joy, but also the completion of it. Our praise for God must overflow out of our joy in God. To praise God is to enjoy Him to the fullest.

Psalm 43 esp vv 4-5

"As we offer our lives to Him, He gives Himself to us-for us to enjoy; and it is that joy in Him that erupts in praise of our awesome and beautiful God. It is in fully enjoying God that we glorify Him the most. The life of praise is one saturated with joy in God."

Psalm 16:7-11

Kay Warren (Wife of Rick Warren, Saddleback Church)

"My problem was my definition of joy. I thought joy meant feeling good all the time. That's impossible! Even for those who are naturally upbeat and optimistic, that's impossible. We have to start somewhere more realistic — and close to Scripture."

So here's the definition I've come up with from studying Scripture:

"Joy is the settled assurance that God is in control of all the details of my life, the quiet confidence that ultimately everything is going to be alright, and the determined choice to praise God in every situation."

Psalm 27:4-6

The joy of the Lord is something SO different from the pursuit of happiness that people strive for. Human happiness tends to be temporary and obtained through new experiences, possessions and relationships. The pursuit of happiness will leave us dissatisfied. Happiness fluctuates whereas the joy of the Lord is constant when we know how to draw from it, whatever our life circumstances and experiences.

How do joy and hope impact our corporate praise, thanksgiving and worship?

The short answer is – massively!

When we believe the truth about who we are in God's grace and righteousness we realise that we have an unchangeable status. We are eternally secure and have a hope and a future beyond the fleetingness of this life. We genuinely have reasons to celebrate – with shouts of joy!

Joy is knowing that:

Jesus has done it all!

Outstanding (and outrageous!) is God's love and grace to us.

You are the object of His affection and love

(see Colossians 1:21-22, Ephesians 2:4-9, Deuteronomy 10:15)