Yes – And

Week 9: Icing on the Cake - Joy

I. Concluding the "Yes And" sermon series.

[Following from first in the sermon series.] Christian ethics isn't God watering down the standard for the sake of inclusivity. The holiness of God is still the same today as it has always been. God has reconciled us as sinners through Jesus resulting in our lives being imputed to the righteousness of Christ. Through God's Spirit in us, we pursue the holiness of God. We fail forward, but God's holy standard never changes!

That's why our character as Christ followers is a "yes- and."

The standard is no longer the Law but Jesus!

We'll launch into specific topics next week that have an Old Testament ethic and a reaffirmed or expanded ethic in the New Testament.

There's a connection between the Old Covenant and New Covenant because the author of Hebrews associates the veil that formerly stood as the boundary of the Holy of Holies with the very flesh of Jesus Christ!

There is a standard by which we now live not to get us into the presence of God, but because we're now those in the presence of God!

What is it that unites us together? Those of us who are Christ followers.

We've been drawn near to the presence of God and, by virtue, to one another!

There is nothing else that unites us together as the family of God other than we are those who have passed through the veil only by the blood of Jesus! Not our skin color, age, bank account, social status, or anything else ultimately maintains our fellowship.

What bonds us together is our fellowship through the veil in the very presence of God.

The series has considered Christian ethics in gender, work, forgiveness, race, and generosity.

II. Today:

A. So what, as a result of this series? Not attractional, but what is attractive about Christianity?

Joy – is the most unique and attractive characteristic of the Christian life.

B. Let's consider 3 relationships (with):

1. The Father and His love

2. The Son, Jesus, our Savior and brother – and source of life

3. The Holy Spirit – our comforter, friend, guide and source of power in this new life

C. Let's consider 2 questions:

1. Who do You say I am?

2. What do You want me to know?

D. What does it look like to have contagious joy?

III. First let's consider what keeps or prevents us from having joy?

A. Idols (Interpersonal):

1. **Approval –**
2. **Comfort –**
3. **Control –**
4. **Power –**

B. Enemies of the Heart (Internal):

1. **Jealousy –**
2. **Guilt –**
3. **Anger –**
4. **Greed –**

C. Progression: Sin, Separation, Pain

DOA:

1. **Distraction -**
2. **Obsession – ultimately eradicates joy**
3. **Addiction –**

D. God's response to our pain – Jesus!

The Cross has 2 parts:

1. **Forgiving sin, abuse, rejection, neglect <u>against us</u>**
2. **Forgiving <u>our sin</u> against God and others**

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV) - 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

E. What Jesus did for our joy:

Hebrews 12:1-3 (NIV) - 12 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

1. **Guilt – a result of when I do wrong, versus**
2. **Shame – when I conclude that I am wrong.**
3. **Satan loves to use guilt and shame to keep us down, but thanks to Jesus' forgiveness and salvation, we no longer need to live in either and can rather live as a beloved son or daughter!**
4. **Jesus is the beginning of our joy.**

F. What about the things in the Christian life that challenge our joy?

James 1:2-4 (NIV) - 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

1. **We do not fall apart and compromise in the face of trials (idols and enemies of the heart)**
2. **When we exercise our faith, we can enjoy victory today, not far off in the future.**

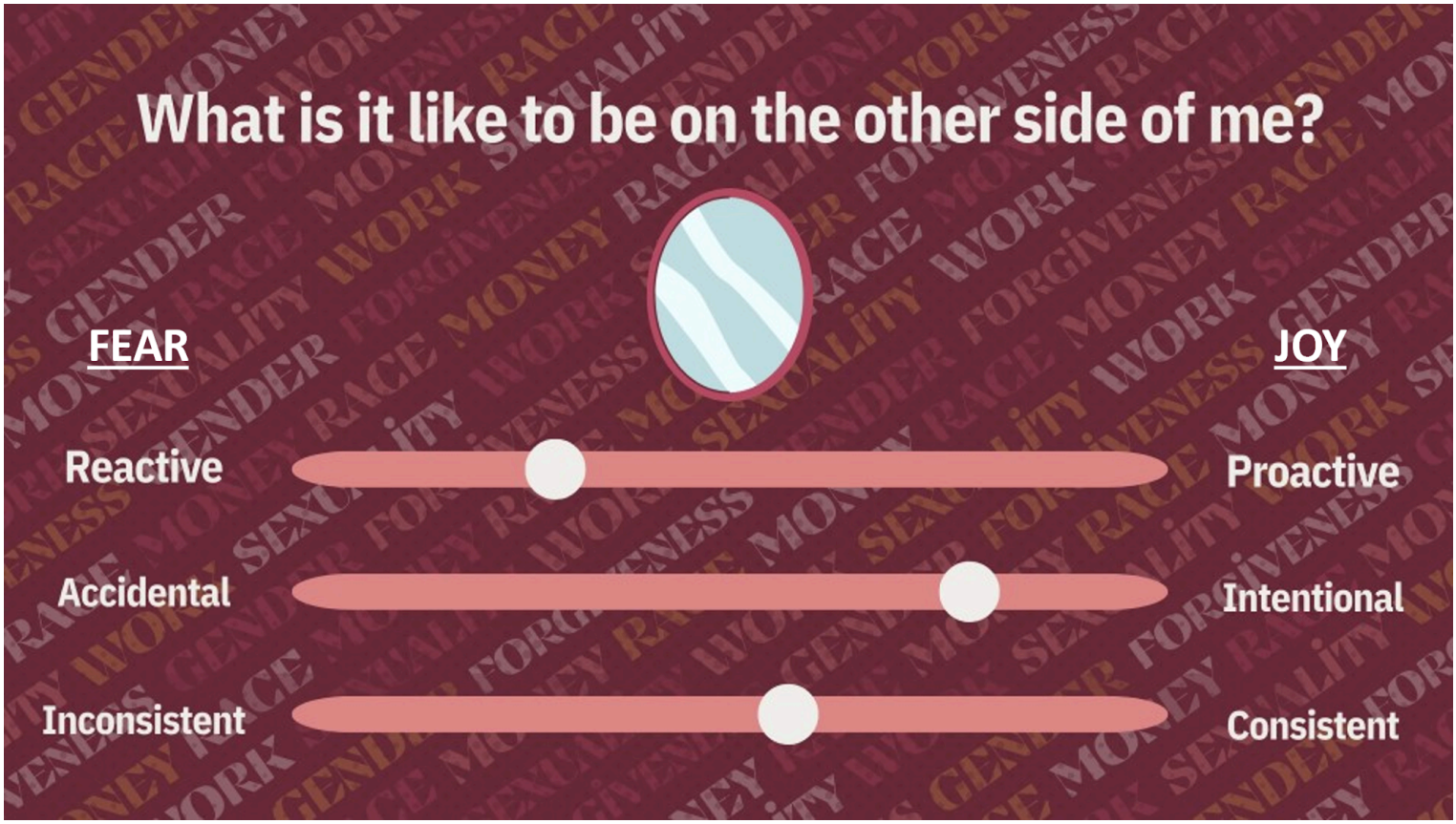
G. What is the context for joy?

Romans 5:3-5 (NIV) - 3 Not only so, but we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4 perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

1. **Consider Saul driven versus Paul called.**
2. **Consider Saul moved by Fear versus Paul motivated by the Joy of the Lord.**

IV. The opposite of Joy is Fear.

A. A Tool to consider the Fear versus Joy in our life:



B. Joy as we face trials.

1. **An opportunity to display Christian character.**
2. **We serve as unto the Lord.**
3. **Long obedience – take trial from me, but Thy will, and if it persists, I am in it!**

C. We are created in the image of God, and thanks to Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we can display His character, enter His joy regardless of our circumstances, and be attractive as we share the reason for the hope within us.