

Day 21
Pastor Ben Brewster

In Deuteronomy 28:1, God is guiding his people to what will be best for them, “If you faithfully obey the voice of the Lord your God, being careful to do all his commandments that I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.” It is best for us to do things God’s way. As we have reflected on the Joy of God throughout the week, one thing is clear: we will not find true joy through anything or anyone but Jesus.

Deuteronomy is a review of the Law given to the Israelites. The Law was the way in which God chose to reveal himself to his people. It was supposed to guide them to blessing. It was supposed to guide them to life. But God’s people were still people. Later in the chapter, in Deuteronomy 28:47, God warns them that disaster and curses will come upon them if they do not remember to dedicate themselves to his Law, “Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, because of the abundance of all things.”

This is why we need Jesus so desperately. Without him, we are incapable of following God the way he wants. He doesn’t just want us to perform a certain set of behaviors, but he wants us to have a certain attitude. He wants us to serve him “with joyfulness and gladness of heart. And we can’t have that attitude with the hearts we have. We need a heart that loves God, and only Jesus can give us that.

God identifies one of the catalysts to the lacking of joy in the service of God is “the abundance of things”. Do you ever find yourself distracted from your relationship with God by “the abundance of things”? Maybe deep down you think you really do not need God because you are doing pretty well. Or maybe you see the abundance others have, and you are mad at God because you don’t have as much as you want. God tells us that what we fail to realize is that the abundance comes from Him! We will take the good things God gives us, make them the idols of our life, and forget about the One from whom they came.

So, to live with the Joy of Christ, we must be humbled. Humbled as we recognize that we do not love God naturally, and we need a new heart from Jesus. Humbled as we recognize we are not self-sustaining, and that everything we have is a gift from God. Humbled so that we do not get distracted by the abundance of things, that we might serve God in the manner in which he desires, and deserves, to be served: with joyfulness and gladness of heart.