

December 16, 2018 – Elmont Baptist Church
Message Series: Advent 2018 – Enjoying the Wait
Week 3: Hope & Joy
Text: Romans 5:2-5

Advent begins the 4th Sunday before Christmas Day. This year that was December 2. Advent means “waiting” or “arrival”, and it is a deliberate slowing down to appreciate the first coming of Jesus in His birth, and a looking ahead to His coming again. We often don’t think about waiting with enjoyment, but, as followers of Jesus, that’s exactly what were commanded to do. We should be enjoying the wait. Making the most of our time here to the glory of God until Christ comes again or calls us to Himself.

Today we’re going to deal with Hope and Joy together, and prayerfully see the connection they have to one another through a passage out of Romans 5 and a few other texts.

Hope & Joy are Essential, Not Optional

✓ **Take in the Truth**

- **Hope is Fueled by God’s Promises** – Romans 15:4

Hope and faith are so closely linked. Hope is future oriented faith in promises made because of past promises that have been kept.

- **Hope is Fulfilled in a Person** – 1 Timothy 1:1

Our hope is ultimately Jesus. Our hope is not something bigger than God through Christ. It is God through Christ.

- **Hope Overflows with Joy** – Romans 5:2-5; 12:12

Hope is the branch and joy is the fruit. Romans 12:12 says to “Rejoice in hope”. The link between hope and joy is as strong as the link between faith and hope. When we lose hope in the future, we lose joy in the present. Hope fuels joy. We are commanded to have joy. The problem is that even though joy is deep and firm in our soul, it still has an emotional component that you cannot just turn on and off. So even though you cannot produce joy by will or choice, you can do things that help produce joy. You can plant seeds of joy in the soil of hope. Don’t confuse this with doing things that entertain you, but rather doing things that fuel you with love and affection for Jesus. So if you’re failing to live with joy, then there is likely a problem with the level of hope that you live with or, more accurately, live without. Pursuing joy is really filling your tank with hope and letting that

overflow. It’s planting seeds of joy that only the Holy Spirit can grow in the soil of hope.

✓ **Pursue the Joy of the Lord**

- **Deliberately think about Jesus’ life & love** – Rom 5:8; 8:31-39
- **Deliberately think about eternity with Jesus** – Col 3:1-4

There is a purposefulness in our pursuing joy or planting seeds of joy. In our doing things that will grow a crop of joy in our lives. We would never expect a gardener to produce good fruit if he leaves his garden unattended. To leave the garden of our heart unattended and expect good things to grow is even more foolish, because eternity hangs in the balance. When you don’t do very deliberate things to plant seeds of joy, nature takes over and the fruit of your flesh will grow. These are weeds that choke out your delight in Christ. With no work or effort these things grow and they are found in several sin lists in the New Testament. Galatians 5:19-21 contrast the fruit of the flesh to the fruit of the Spirit. Spiritual fruit is grown by the Holy Spirit, but you have to prepare the soil, your heart. There are many things you can do and need to do, but the bottom line is that you deliberately do things that help think about Jesus, His life and love, and eternity with Him.

Thinking it Through...

- ✓ **Do the promises God has kept help fuel your hope for the days ahead with less worry and anxiety?**
- ✓ **Would those around you describe you as a joy-filled follower of Jesus?**
- ✓ **Do you ever take time to intentionally meditate on the goodness of Jesus and eternity with Him?**

