**Always Rejoicing: Ecclesiastes and Beyond**

**Doxology Insight**

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

August 29-30, 2016

1. **The Wisdom of Earthly Enjoyment in Ecclesiastes**
2. **Introduction: the Pursuit of Happiness**
3. The Bill of Rights: “the pursuit of happiness”

* Shift in sense of happiness in my life
* Mental state of satisfaction to feeling good
* Being happy to feeling happy

1. Yet the pursuit of happiness is counterproductive.

* Happiness as an incidental, secondary good: mood rather than state of being
* By-product of living rather than goal of life
* The case of C. S. Lewis in ***Surprised by Joy*:** joy as aresult of faith in Christ
* God does not promise to make us happy but to give us joy: to share in his joy with us

1. The difference between happiness and joy

* Happiness as a fleeting emotion that excludes sadness
* Joy as a lasting state of being that can co-exist with sadness
* Joy as the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual state of the whole person
* Earthly joy as a foretaste of heavenly joy
* Christian joy as supernatural and angelic and divine
* External source of joy that breaks in on us like the sun that shines even when it is cloudy and at night: kind of ecstasy that takes us out and beyond ourselves

1. My aim: to explore two kinds of joy

* Earthly joy that is available to all righteous people in the order of creation: Ecclesiastes
* Heavenly joy that is given to all the saints in the order of redemption: New Testament

1. **The Question for Exploration in Ecclesiastes**

See 1:2-3: *“Breath of breaths!” says the Teacher. “All is just a breath! What is the profit for a person from all the work at which he works under the sun?”*

1. Riddle: vivid image for what is fleeting, insubstantial, beyond human grasp and control

* Usual unhelpful translations: vanity, meaninglessness
* Hebrew word הבל: breath, vapour, puff of air, gust of wind
* Image for what is transitory and fleeting, insubstantial and ephemeral, beyond human grasp and control

1. Author’s audit of “profit” from work for himself and Adam’s descendants

* Hebrew commercial term יתרור
* See its metaphorical use in 2:11, 13; 3:9; 5:9, 16; 7:12; 10:10, 11.

1. Work under the sun = life on earth in the order of creation
2. Ecclesiastes: “the confessions of a workaholic” (Johnson)
3. **The Seven Counsels for Earthly Enjoyment in Ecclesiastes**
4. Background in Deuteronomy

* God’s gift of a piece of land to each family as their allotment from him and means of blessing for them
* God’s twofold blessing of his people: food from work and rejoicing in the fruit of their work (Deut 12:7, 18)
* The tabernacle and temple as the place for “rejoicing in the Lord’s presence” (Deut 12:7, 12, 18; 14:26; 27:7)
* Lord as host and people as his guests
* Rejoicing by “eating” the holy food from their offerings with family and friends
* Times for rejoicing: festivals
* Feast of Weeks/Pentecost at the end of the grain harvest (Deut 16:11; 26:11) ► fifty days of rejoicing in Easter
* Feast of Tabernacles: seven days of joyful feasting at the end of agricultural year (Deut 16:14, 15)

1. First observation in Ecclesiastes 2:24-26: **24*There is nothing as good for a man as to eat and drink and to bring himself to see (discover) what is good in his work. This also, I have seen, is from the hand of God, 25for apart from Him who can eat and have enjoyment? 26For to a man who is good before Him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he has given the task of gathering and collecting only to give it to the one who is good before God. This too is but a breath and a chasing of the wind.***

* First of four observations on what is good for a person in this life (3:12, 22; 8:18)
* Question: what’s **good** in our ordinary life on earth?
* Simple answer: daily meals and daily work
* Two kinds of eating and drinking
* Domestic meals with the family (Gen 24:54)
* Festive meals with God (Ex 24:11; 1 Chr 29:22)
* Close connection between meals and work: work for food and its enjoyment and enjoyment of food for enjoyment of work
* God’s gifts to every human being
* Food and drink
* Work and the enjoyment of what is good in it
* Issue: work as burden since the fall ►need to look for what’s good **in** our work to discover and enjoy it: often hidden
* Common problems
* The pursuit of possessions without enjoyment of them
* Enjoyment from work rather than enjoyment of work
* The good person before God = the person that pleases Him, the person who has His approval for what he is doing
* God-fearing, upright, moral person
* His earthly reward for civic righteousness
* Enjoyment as **God’s gift** to those who please him: wisdom as the practical knowledge of what gives joy as well as the experience of it
* God’s treatment of sinners who miss out on His approval: work without joy for the benefit of those who please God

1. Second observation in 3:9-13: **9*What profit is there for a worker in his work? 10I have seen the business that God has given to the children of Adam to be busy with. 11He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in their heart, yet so that no man can find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. 12I know that there is nothing as good for them as to rejoice and do what is good in his life. 13It is also a gift of God that any man can eat and drink and see what is good in his work.***

* Second of four observations
* Conclusion from the poem on the times and seasons for human life on earth in 3:1-8
* Question: profit in work rather than profit from work
* God’s time for human work, so that everything is beautiful and enjoyable in its time: different joys at different seasons in life
* Human desire for anything good to last forever
* Frustration because we cannot see the big picture of God’s plan for us and the world so that we can co-ordinate what we do with what God is doing to maximise our enjoyment
* Living in the moment of enjoyment which whets our appetite for eternal joy: foretaste of eternity
* ***I know***: knowledge of four good things given by God to a wise person
* Rejoicing in daily life
* Doing good work in daily life: working well
* God’s gift of daily food and drink
* God’s gift of insight into what’s good in his work: the good for himself and others as cause for gratitude and joy

1. Third observation in 3:22a: ***So I have seen that there is nothing as good as that a man should rejoice in his deeds, for that is his lot.***

* Third of four observations
* Deeds = what a person does and what is produced by what he does
* Key picture: **lot**, portion, allotment. See also 2:10, 21; 5:18, 19; 9:6, 9.
* Original sense of חלק: God’s allotment of a portion of land to each family of the Israelites for him to provide for their livelihood = necessities and luxuries
* New sense: God’s **allotment** of joy and rejoicing by his provision of work and leisure
* God’s **allotment** to each descendant of Adam
* Finite span of life: the days of his life (5:18; 9:9; cf. 5:19; 8:15)
* Work and its enjoyment (3:22; 5:18)
* Food and drink (5:18)
* Wife and experience of life with her (9:9)
* Best life = life of rejoicing in what we do each day
* Basis for Luther’s teaching on finding joy in each station and vocation
* Different stations different tasks
* Different tasks different joys
* See verse 5 from Jesus, I my cross have taken (TLH 423):

***Take, my soul, thy full salvation;***

***Rise o’er sin and fear and care;***

***Joy to find in every station,***

***Something still to do or bear.***

***Think what Spirit dwells within thee,***

***What a Father’s smile is thine,***

***What a Savior died to win thee;***

***Child of heaven, shouldst thou repine?***

1. Fourth summative observation in 5:18-20**: *18Indeed I myself have seen that is good, that is beautiful ( pleasant), to eat and drink and rejoice and see what is good in one’s work which one does under the sun during the number of days of his life that God has given him, for that is his lot. 19It is also a gift of God that any man whom God has given wealth and possessions has the power (capacity) to eat from them and to accept his lot and rejoice in his work. For he will hardly remember/notice the days of his life because God keeps him occupied with joy in his heart.***

* Summary of first three passages in first sentence with an emphasis on the limited time for rejoicing in life here on earth
* Further teaching on our lot
* Further teaching on enjoyment of work
* Three additional abilities as gifts from God in addition to money and property
* Hearty appetite for food: see loss of appetite with depression and ill health as pictured in 6:1-2a: *1There is an evil that I have seen under the sun, and it weighs heavily upon mankind: 2a person to whom God gives wealth and possessions and honor, so he never lacks anything for his life from all that he desires, but God has not given him the power/capacity to eat them.*
* Acceptance of allotted life, work, food, and spouse ► contentment in station and vocation
* Rejoicing in work
* Result of these three abilities
* Present engrossment in work that does not notice the passing of time: opposite to boredom
* Ecstasy of work with enjoyment
* Gift of joy as a foretaste of eternity

1. Fifth counsel with its summary recommendation in 8:15: ***So I myself recommend joy (rejoicing), because there is nothing as good for a man under the sun as to eat and drink and rejoice. That will encircle him (like a wreathe) in his work all the days that God gives to him under the sun.***

* First conclusion: recommendation of rejoicing
* Shift from “I have seen” to “I recommend”
* Picture of wreathe on a person’s head: symbol of divine acceptance and approval
* Occasional rejoicing in God’s gift of joy as at the three Jewish festivals or at weddings or at meals ► continual rejoicing in all the work that God gives to do for the whole of life

1. Sixth counsel with seven instructions in 9:7-10: ***7Go, eat your bread with joy, and drink your wine with a good heart (conscience), for God has already approved your works (what you do). 8Let your clothes always be white, and let perfume not be lacking on your head. 9See (experience) life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of your breath-like (fleeting) life, (your wife) whom He has given to you under the sun – all your breath-like (fleeting) days, for that/she is your lot in life and in your work at which you work under the sun. 10Whatever you hand finds to do, do it with all your might, for there is no doing or planning or knowing or wisdom in the underworld/grave where you are going.***

* First conclusion: seven instructions as keys to enjoyment
* Walking through life, eating with joy and drinking with a good conscience: God’s marks of approval for you by His gifts to you in your station and vocation
* Wearing of white clothes and use of perfume at all times as if for a religious festival or festive occasion such as a wedding
* Sharing of fleeting life with one’s spouse: common experience of work and leisure as one’s lot from God
* Doing what is given to do wholeheartedly each day: enthusiasm, zest, gusto for work
* The opportunity for these things only in this life

1. Seventh counsel with eight instructions in 11:7-10: ***7Light is sweet, and it is good for the eyes to see the sun. 8So even if a man lives many years, let him rejoice in them all, and let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is but a breath. 9Rejoice, you young person, in your youth, and let your heart/mind cheer you (do you good) in the days of your youth; 10walk in the ways of your heart/mind and in the sights of your eyes, and know that for all these things God will bring you into judgement; 11remove vexation (disappointment) from your heart and banish trouble from your body, for youth and the dawn of life are but a breath****.*

* Opening proverb: sunlight and its enjoyment
* Image for human life on earth
* Gift for all but enjoyment by those who experience its sweetness
* Eight final instructions: two to the mature person and six to the young person
* Concluding advice for a mature person: problem of nostalgia
* Two directives: enjoyment of each stage in life and remembrance of death
* Days of darkness = old age (12:2) and death (6:4)
* Daily rejoicing in passing blessings
* Concluding advice for a young person: youth as the most miserable time for many
* Rejoicing in the present stage of life rather than looking for future enjoyment
* Having a positive attitude to life that comes from a cheerful heart
* Walking in the ways of the cheerful heart and the sights of the eyes: living thoughtfully and looking for what is given to be done and enjoyed each step on life’s journey
* Knowing God’s judgment for not enjoying what was given to enjoy: see the comment of Rabbi Rab in the Talmud: “Every man must render account before God for all the good things he beheld in his life and did not enjoy.”
* Removal of vexation: the crippling anger and cynicism that comes from failure and disappointment
* Banishment of physical trouble by refusing to let vexation take over
* Reason: fleeting youthfulness with all its opportunities
* See the instruction in 12:1-8 on remembering our Creator in our youth before it is too late to enjoy his gifts.

1. **General Conclusions**
2. Instruction on God’s good gifts to every descendant of Adam in the order of creation

* The days of our lives
* Our food and drink and their enjoyment
* Our work and its enjoyment
* Our spouse and our experience of life with our spouse
* Seeing what is good in our work
* Lifelong joy
* Wisdom and knowledge to receive and experience the gift of joy from God
* Our wealth and our possessions that we need as our livelihood
* Our ability to eat our food with a hearty appetite, to accept our lot in life, and rejoice in our work
* Message of Paul and Barnabas to people in Lystra in Acts 14:17: ***he (the living God) did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying you hearts with food and gladness.***

1. God’s provision of earthly joy to all God-fearing people in their station and vocation

* See Eccl 8:12: ***I know that it will be well for those who fear God, because they fear Him****.*
* Fear as respect for God’s providence and his allotment of gifts to all people, each in their station and vocation

1. 1 Tim 6:6-8: ***Godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.***

* Greed as opposite of contentment (sufficiency)
* Great gain = enjoyment

1. 1 Tim 6:17: ***God… richly provides us with everything to enjoy****.*
2. **The Wisdom of Heavenly Enjoyment**
3. **The Prophecies of Heavenly Joy for Zion in the New Age**
4. Prophecies of joy and exultation in Isaiah (25:9; 30:29; 35:1-2, 10; 41:16; 42:11; 44:23; 49:13; 51:3, 11; 52:8-9; 54:1; 55:12; 56:7; 60:15; 61:3, 7, 10; 62:12; 65:14, 18-19; 66:10, 14).
5. Reversal of the normal experience of enjoyment

* Location: earth ► heaven and earth (Is 44:23; 49:13)
* Agents of rejoicing: God’s people in Him ► God in them and they in God
* Focus of enjoyment: earthly gifts for life in the order of creation ► heavenly gifts for life in the order of redemption
* Use of שוש/ששון = ἀγγαλλιάω/ἀγαλλίασις for jubilant, ecstatic liturgical and eschatological **exultation** that comes from God and is in God: see Matt 5:12; Luke 1:14, 47; 10:21; John 5:35; 8:56; Acts 2:26, 46; 16:34; I Pet 1:6, 8: 4:13; Rev 19:7

1. The gift of joy in the heart from God in Ps 4:7 from participation in the divine service: ***You have put more joy in my heart than they when their grain and wine abound.***
2. The promise of fullness of joy in God’s presence in Ps 16:8-11:

*8****I have set the Lord always before me;***

***because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.***

***9Therefore my heart rejoices and my glorified being is exults;***

***my flesh also rests secure.***

***10For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol,***

***or let your devout one see corruption.***

***11You make known to me the path of life;***

***in your presence there is fullness of joy;***

***at your right hand are pleasures forevermore****.*

* This is a prophetic psalm of David (Acts 2:24-33; 13:32-39)
* By his death and resurrection God leads Jesus on the path of life that passes through death to life in His heavenly presence.
* In the Father’s presence there is fullness of joy for Jesus and his disciples.
* Implication of ***fullness of joy***: partial, incomplete joy on earth
* At God’s right hand Jesus conveys to the church the gifts that bring fullness of joy and eternal pleasures, the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit.
* There the exalted Lord Jesus ***exults*** in God the Father with the fullness of joy in order to share it with the church.

1. The promise of a meal to celebrate the death of death in Is 25:6-9:

***6On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all nations***

***a feast of rich food (fat meat), a feast of well-aged wine,***

***of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.***

***7And he will swallow up on this mountain***

***the covering that is cast over all peoples,***

***the veil that is spread over all nations.***

***8He will swallow up death forever;***

***and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces,***

***and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,***

***for the Lord has spoken.***

***9It will be said on that day,***

***“Behold, this is our God;***

***we have waited for him to save us.***

***This is the Lord; we have waited for him;***

***let us exult and rejoice in our salvation.***

* Time of the feast: new age after the Last Judgment
* Site of the feast: Mount Zion = the church as the heavenly city of God
* Host of the feast: Lord God
* Guests of the feast: people from all nations
* Food for the feast: choice meat and vintage wine
* Reason for the feast: God’s victory over death for all people and the vindication of his people
* Purpose of the feast: celebration of victory over death and deliverance from death with gladness and rejoicing

1. The promise of everlasting joy in Is 51:9-11 which repeats the prophecy from 35:10 in verse 51:10:

***9Awake, awake, put on strength,***

***O arm of the Lord;***

***awake, as in the days of old,***

***the generations of long ago.***

***Was it not you who cut Rahab in pieces,***

***who pierced the Dragon?***

***10Was it not you who dried up the Sea,***

***the waters of the Great Deep,***

***who made the depths of the sea a way***

***for the redeemed to pass over?***

***11And the ransomed of the Lord shall return***

***and come to Zion with joyful cries;***

***everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;***

***they shall obtain exultation and joy,***

***and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.***

* Imagery from pagan mythology for victory over forces of chaos in the world
* Terms for chaotic powers in the cosmos and politics
* Rahab: sea monster (Ps 89:11) ► state of Egypt (Is 30:7) ► sorcerers (Job 9:13) who conjure up Leviathon (Job 3:8)
* The dragon: serpent Leviathon (Is 27:1) ► Pharaoh (Ezek 29:3; 32:2)
* The Sea: the Canaanite god of the underworld and the enemy of humanity
* The Great Deep: the underworld as the place of death, darkness and disorder
* Prayer for God’s intervention
* To defeat Satan and the forces of evil
* To redeem His people from death and destruction as at their deliverance from Egypt
* To make a way for them through the underworld as at the exodus
* The return of the redeemed along the Lord’s ***way*** for entry into Zion with rejoicing (cf. Is 35:8-10; 40:3-5; 43:16-21; 62:10-12)
* The gift of ***everlasting joy*** for them in Zion (cf. 35:10; 61:7): see also the Messiah’s promise to anoint the citizens of Zion with “the oil of exultation” in 61:3
* Prophecy of our participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus for entry into the city of God
* The church as the place for everlasting joy and eschatological ***exultation***

1. The promise of God’s exultation over Zion his bride in Is 62:4-5:

**4*You (Zion) shall no more be termed Forsaken (Azubah)***

***and your land shall no more be termed Desolate (Shemanah),***

***but you shall be called My-Delight-in-Her (Hephzibah),***

***and your land Married (Beulah),***

***for the Lord delights in you,***

***and your land shall be married.***

***5For as a young man marries a young woman,***

***so shall your sons marry you,***

***and as a bridegroom exults over his bride,***

***so shall your God exult over you.***

* The result of God’s vindication of Zion and her citizens (62:1-2)
* God’s delight in Zion in the age of redemption as his diadem and crown
* God’s joyful exultation over Zion as His bride

1. The rejoicing of God’s people in Zion at His rejoicing over them in His new creation in Is 65:17-19:

*1****7Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth,***

***and the former things shall not be remembered***

***or come into mind.***

***18But exult and rejoice forever***

***in what I create;***

***for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,***

***and her people to be exultation.***

***19I will rejoice in Jerusalem***

***and exult in my people;***

***no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping***

***and the cry of distress.***

* God’s creation of Zion and her citizens as an eschatological

place of rejoicing and exultation in his creation of new heavens and a new earth

* There God rejoices and exults in His people: object of his joy and exultation
* There they rejoice and exult in what God has created for them
* Union of divine and human rejoicing: the circuit of joy

1. Zion’s rejoicing over her Savior who is present with His beloved people to rejoice over them in Zephaniah 3:14-16:

***14Cry aloud, O daughter Zion;***

***shout, O Israel!***

***Rejoice and exult with all your heart,***

***O daughter Jerusalem.***

***15The Lord has taken away the judgments against you;***

***He has cleared away you enemies.***

***the King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;***

***you shall never again fear evil.***

***16On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:***

***“Fear not, O Zion;***

***let not your hands grow weak.***

***The Lord your God is in your midst,***

***a mighty One who will save;***

***He will exult over you with rejoicing;***

***He will quiet/renew you with His love;***

***He will be glad over you with joyful cries.***

* Prophecy about the church as a place of human and divine rejoicing in the age of salvation
* Proclamation of three things to the church
* Declaration that they have no reason to be discouraged and afraid
* Presence of God in its midst as its Savior
* God’s assurance of His love for them by His joy at being with them
* Call for the church to rejoice in its salvation and exult in its Saviour who exults over them by singing His song of love to them.

1. **Christ’s Gift of Heavenly Joy for the Church on Earth**
2. Shift from the use of εὐφραίνω/εὐφροσύνη as the translation for שמח/שמחה in the LXX to χαίρω/χαρά in the NT to signal that joy was much more than happiness as a good mood
3. The proclamation of the angel to the shepherds in Luke 2:10-14 at the birth of Jesus

* The “gospel of great joy” of Christ the Lord: heavenly joy to people on earth (2:10)
* See LSB 387 “Joy to the world”:

***Joy to the world, the Lord has come!***

***Let earth receive her King;***

***Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room***

***And heav’n and nature sing.***

* + Joy for the world that had lost its joy
  + Search for joy in the wrong places
  + Confusion of happiness with joy
  + Illusionary joy from sex and counterfeit joy from drugs
  + Cynicism from disillusionment
* Call of the angels to join with them in praising God with their doxology (2:13-14): association of joy with praise
* See the other references to glorifying God in Luke 2:20; 5:25-26; 7:16; 13:13; 17:15; 18:43; 23:47 and Jesus in Luke 4:15

1. The joy of Christ’s disciples

* The angel’s call for Mary to rejoice: ***Rejoice, you who are highly favoured! The Lord (is) with you*** (Luke 1:28)
* The exultation of John the Baptist in his mother’s womb at Mary’s visit to her with Jesus (Luke 1:41-44)
* The exultation of Mary whose spirit rejoices in her God Saviour (1:47; cf. 1 Sam 2:1; Is 61:10)
* The great joy of the wise men at the star that led them to Jesus (Matt 2:10)
* The joy of hearing and receiving God’s word, the gospel of salvation (Matt 13:20; Acts 8:8, 39; 13:48; 16:34; 1 Thess 1:5)
* The joy of the man who finds hidden treasure (Matt 13:44)
* The joy of Zachaeus at receiving Jesus as his guest (Luke 19:6)
* The joy of the crowd of disciples who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem with praise (Luke 19:37-38)
* The joy of the disciples at the risen Lord (Luke 24:41; John 20:20; cf. John 14:28; 16:20, 22)
* The return of the disciples to Jerusalem with joy after Jesus their heavenly high priest had blessed them (Luke 24:52)
* The exultation of the Jerusalem congregation as they celebrated the Lord’s Supper and ate together in their homes (Acts 2:46)
* The exultation of believers with joy that is unutterable and filled with glory (1 Pet 1:8-9): ***Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and exult with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.***
* Exultation from faith in the risen the risen Lord
* Reason: present salvation
* Ecstatic and inexpressible joy that goes beyond words
* Foretaste of glory
* The call of the church in heaven to the church on earth to join with them in rejoicing and exultation at the wedding supper of the Lamb with his bride (Rev 19:7):

***Let us rejoice and exult***

***and give him glory,***

***for the marriage of the Lamb has come,***

***and his bride has made herself ready.***

1. Heavenly joy for the church on earth

* Joy in heaven (Luke 13:7; cf. Matt 18:13) and in the presence of the angels (Luke 15:10) over each penitent sinner
* The father’s joyful meal of celebration with his servants at the return of his lost son (Luke 15:24, 32): ***It was fitting (ἔδει) to be happy and rejoice for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found***
* The call of the disciples by Jesus to rejoice that their names are written in heaven (Luke 10:17-20)
* The Spirit-filled exultation of Jesus as voiced
* in his thanksgiving at the Father’s revelation of Himself to his disciples through His Son (Luke 10:21-22)
* and in sharing his joy with them (Luke 10:23-24): ***Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.***
* The greeting of the women by the risen Lord Jesus as a call to rejoice (Matt 28:8-9): ***So they (the women) departed with great joy, and ran to tell the disciples. And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Rejoice.”***
* The teaching of his disciples by Jesus so that their joy may be complete (John 17:11, 13): ***Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one…But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in them.***
* Complete joy from receptive prayer to the Father in the Son’s name (John 16:24): ***Until now you have asked nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive, that your joy may be complete/full*** (complete).
* Complete joy from remaining in the Son’s love (15:9-12): ***As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that you joy may be full/complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.***
* The Son’s joy is complete when his disciples abide in his love and keep his commandments just as the Son abides in the father’s love and keeps his commandments.
* Their joy is complete when they abide in his love and love another
* Believe in me (14:1)
* Abide in me and my love (15:4, 10)
* Ask whatever in my name (15:7; 16:24)
* Love one another (13:34; 15:12)

1. The nature of Christian joy

* The call to rejoice in the Lord always (Phil 4:4; cf. 2 Cor 13:11; Phil 3:1; 1 Thess 5:16)
* Rejoicing as God’s will for us in Christ Jesus (1 Thess 5:16):

***Rejoice always;***

***pray continually;***

***give thanks in all circumstances,***

***for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.***

* Joy as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22), a gift given by Him (Acts 13:52; Rom 14:17; 15:13; 1 Thess 1:6):
* The devil as the miserable spirit: the killjoy
  + The Holy Spirit as the Spirit of joy
* See verse 3 of “O Enter, Lord, Thy Temple” in ELH 400:

***Thy gift is joy, O Spirit,***

***Thou wouldst not have us pine;***

***In darkest hours Thy comfort***

***Doth ever brightly shine.***

***And, O how oft Thy voice***

***Hath spread its sweetness o’er me***

***And opened heav’n before me***

***And bid my heart rejoice.***

* Rejoicing in what we hope for (Rom 12:12)
* Shared joy by rejoicing in and together with other believers (Rom 12:15; 1 Cor 12:26; 2 Cor 2:3; Phil 2:17-18)
* Progress in faith as progress in joy (Phil 1:25) that overflows (2 Cor 7:4; 8:2)
* Its paradoxical coexistence with pain and sorrow
* Rejoicing when persecuted (Matt 5:12; Luke 6:23; Acts 5:41; Heb 10:34; 1 Pet 4:13)
* Rejoicing in suffering with Christ for the church (Col 1:24)
* Joy with sorrow: ***sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*** (2 Cor 6:10)
* Joy in affliction (2 Cor 7:4) and in temptation (James 1:2)
* Joy in own weakness and in the strength of others (2 Cor 13:9): ***We rejoice when we are weak but you are strong; we pray that you may be made complete/fully trained/ fully equipped.***
* Connection of rejoicing with thankful prayer (Phil 1:3-4; 1 Thess 5:16-17) and praise (Luke 19:37; 24:51-52)
* Bringing of joy by Paul in his ministry to God’s people (Acts 15:3)
* He asks the Christians in Rome to pray for him so that he may come to them with joy and may be refreshed/find rest together with them (Rom 15:32).
* In 2 Cor 1:24 he says: ***we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith that you stand firm***.
* Paul’s joy in his congregations
* His joy and crown (Phil 4:1; 1 Thess 2:19-20)
* His joy as he remembers them in his daily prayers (Phil 1:3-5; 1 Thess 3:9-10)
* The joy of face to face contact with fellow believers (Phil 2:28; 2 John 12)

1. **Conclusion**
2. Augustine on shared joy in his *Confessions,* Book VIII.4.9: ***When many rejoice together the joy of each individually is richer, since each inflames the other and the warmth spreads through all.***
3. Luther on the Magnificat in LW 21, 302: ***For to praise the Lord with gladness is not a work of man; it is rather a joyful suffering and the work of God alone. It cannot be taught but must be learned in one’s own experience.***

* Contrast between self-generated joy and God-generated joy
* Joy as ***the work of God alone***: what God says and does rather than on what we say and do
* His rejoicing in us as the foundation for our joy
* Experience of saturation with the divine sweetness of the Holy Spirit
* Received ecstatic joy that comes from outside us into us
* Joy that is not based on our feeling about God rather than faith in God’s “feeling” towards us
* ***Joyful suffering***: joy in the passive voice before joy in the active voice

1. Luther on perfect enjoyment in LW 30, 24-25: ***while we are living on earth, our joy cannot be perfect like the angels. Through faith we are beginning to feel some of it. In heaven, however, it is so great that no human heart can grasp it. But when we get there, we, too, shall feel it****.*

* Our limited spiritual emotional intelligence: limited capacity for joy and enjoyment
* Perfect experience of joy in heaven

1. Verse 4 of 386 Now Sing We, Now Rejoice:

***Oh, where shall joy be found?***

***Where but on heav’nly ground?***

***Where the angels singing***

***With all the saints unite,***

***Sweetest praises bringing***

***In heav’nly joy and light.***

***Oh, that we were there!***

***Oh, that we were there!***

1. Jude 24-25: ***Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with exultation to the only God, our Savior, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.***