**Transcript**

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I Love My Church – Things I Love
9/1/24

Joy Church

Intro – comments

I love my Church - 4 Things I love about Joy Church

Jake and I – Red Sox – not front row, but close
• What is 1 thing – concert/sporting event/Broadway/Wrestling – that you’d love to have front row seats for?
o What is 1 Bible story that you’d love to have been on the front row to see?
♣ Besides resurrection

There are so many to choose from
• So many miraculous things/stories
o Let me say, though, that all of us have front row seats seeing what God is doing in Joy Church
♣ Miracles

Back to question
• My choice – Acts 2
o Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit to dwell in us
♣ The very beginning of Jesus’ church after his ascension
• Background – death, burial, resurrection
o 40 days on earth
o Told disciples to wait in Jerusalem – Acts 1:8
♣ Then it all happens

So, looking at the beginning of the church
• I want to share with you 4 things I love about Joy Church
I love my Church – 4 things I love about Joy Church
o There are many more, but 4

First
• 1 – Anyone can come here
o Don’t believe it – look around
• Who here has ever been turned away from a place?
o Me – Driving range, airport lounge
• Some of us – restaurants with dress codes
• Some – maybe even at church
o Maybe it wasn’t you but someone you love/are close to
♣ A single mother (my generation)
♣ Gay brother
• You aren’t directly turned away, but you know they weren’t welcomed, and you didn’t feel welcome as a result
o Paula wearing pants to church

But let’s take a look in this room from Acts 2
• See who was there
o Who Jesus started the OG church with
♣ Disciples – James, John, Peter, Mary, Jesus’ brothers (half)

There were people who had denied him
• Peter – told Jesus he would never deny him
o Ride or die
o Never let him down
♣ Until a teenaged girl asked him if he knew Jesus

Here’s the thing, I believe Peter meant it when he told Jesus he would never deny him
• Not throwing shade on Peter
o He meant it
• The pressure grew
o And he did what he thought he’d never do
• Who can relate?

Those who denied
• Those who doubted
o You thought of Thomas, right?
♣ “Doubting Thomas” – but think about it
• He had been to Jesus’ funeral
• Had seen him die on the cross
• Buried
o And he wasn’t there when Jesus appeared to the others
• What would you do?
o At a funeral and someone tells you the dead guy is going to get up and walk in a couple of days
♣ Crazy?
• Of course
o “Honest Thomas”
♣ The power of resurrection can change your mind

Doubt?
• I’m talking about Mary and Jesus’ brothers
o Mary had doubts about him as Son of God
♣ The power of resurrection can change your mind

Jesus’ brothers doubted
• Even made fun of him
o Brothers?
♣ How many have brothers?
♣ What would you do if your brother said he was the Lord, Son of God?
• Maybe think he’s crazy?
o The power of resurrection can change your mind

Those who denied
• Those who doubted
• Also, those who were damaged

So many of us here
• Damaged by what happened to us in the past
• Damaged by the things we caused to happen in the past
o Living day after day feeling like damaged goods
♣ Unusable
♣ Beyond help
♣ Beyond rescue
o Labeled by the baggage you carry
♣ By your past
♣ By the church you were asked to leave

Jesus’ disciples were a messed-up group
• Take 2 of the most talked about
o James and John
o “Sons of Thunder”
• Sounds impressive, sounds like a nice nickname
o But they had some hate issues
♣ Story of Samaritan village
• Weren’t welcomed there (Luke 9:54-56)
o James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven on them
♣ We might like that
• Get cut off in traffic? Call down fire
• Dinner out and get your order wrong/cold food (salad dressing on the side)
o Call down fire!

James and John wanted to call down fire from heaven on an entire city
• Of course, Jesus rebuked that

I’m afraid too many of us have a Blockbuster mindset
• Remember Blockbuster – Friday night
o Movies, games
♣ Rewind fees (“be kind, rewind”) – many thousands of dollars on rewind fees
• I was good – never paid a rewind fee

Too many of us have the Blockbuster mindset to rewind our lives to our past
• Remembering who we were
o Peter could have done that
o James and John could have done that
♣ But Jesus wasn’t obsessed with their past
• He was developing them into who they need to be
o And he started the church, proclaimed the gates of hell will not prevail against it, and changed the world with it

And you think that because you’ve had a past
• Denying God
• Doubting Him
o And because of that you’re too damaged for him to save you
♣ Transform you
♣ And develop you into all you were created to be?
o He does that!

The question is, “How can we, on our journey, become more and more like Jesus?”
• I love my church because anyone can come here

2 - because of what we can hear

How many of you wake up to an alarm clock?
• How many of you have the unusual (and annoying) ability to let your alarm clock buzz/beep/honk for 8 minutes before you finally roll over and turn if off?
o And don’t get me started on those ‘snooze hitters’
♣ Is that 9 minutes of sleep – after 12 times of hitting the snooze button – really that good?
• It’s like you can sleep and sleep and not even hear the alarm clock
• Hearing the alarm clock wakes us up to the day
• But, if we don’t hear it we’ll miss out on so much of our day

Acts 2:1-2
• I love this description
o A sound like a mighty rushing wind
• And what happened?
o The Spirit of God moved in that room
o Tongues of fire flaming over their heads
• And we know that when the Spirit of God moves, the Word of God moves

We have the Word of God
• We have the Holy Spirit in us
o So, we can expect a movement of God from this place at least every time we gather here
• I can’t tell you the number of times somebody has come to me at the end of a sermon or later throughout the week and told me, “That sermon was just for me”
o “Were you hiding in my living room this week” (no, that’s creepy)
• Have you ever been in that place – feeling like Kathy or I were all up in your stuff over the past week?
o That’s how we know God is moving; we’re not that good
♣ We can’t be in everyone’s business every week
♣ But the Spirit of God moves when the Word of God speaks

It’s ‘sharper than a 2-edged sword
• And the Spirit of God and the Word of God shapes us to be the people of God
• To impact our communities with the Father’s love
o I love my church because of what we can hear

3 – because of what we feel

I’ve heard it said that we area a ‘feel good’ church
Upbeat music
Coffee and Danish in church
I guess we are a feel-good church
After all, what is the alternative?
A feel bad church?

We have a lot of Harley riders here
For those of you, how does it feel to ride down the road, wind in your face
It’s fun?
I’ve heard it said that it’s the most fun you can have with your clothes on

We can’t help but ‘feel good’ when we come here
We’re in the presence of the Holy Spirit
He is moving
And we’re here celebrating what God can do and is doing in our lives and in our communities

We had an amazing Block Party a couple of weeks ago, saw 250+ people there
Some would say, “you had the party, free food, bounce house, giveaways, just to get more people there and then get them to come on Sunday
You’re right – because I feel good about more and more people hearing more and more about Jesus
I love my church because of what we feel

Maybe the thing I like best – at least for today – is that I love my church because of what is possible
4 – because of what is possible

How many people here speak 2 languages or more fluently
Not just ‘hola’ or ‘bonjour’ – French fry
I mean really speak 2 languages fluently
I took 2 years of Spanish in high school
I can get by – trip to Mexico
And I can learn more – Babbel or Roseta Stone, etc.

Back to Acts 2 (Acts 2:4-6)
Most predominant languages of that area at that time were Hebrew and Greek
At this time in Jerusalem there were people from many surrounding countries
A hundred or so people in this room, representing 12-15 languages
“other languages” – the Holy Spirit gave ability to speak and be understood in all these languages
Maybe Bartholomew spoke and an Italian speaking man understood his Hebrew

This can only happen by the power of the Holy Spirit
God’s Spirit drew a crowd and then enabled men/women to preach in all these languages
What is the likelihood of that?
Who would have ever thought something like that can happen?
The important thing here for me
The Holy Spirit enabled them to do something they could never do on their own
The same Holy Spirit in you helps you do things you’ve never done
Defeat depression
Anxiety
Overcoming what’s overcoming you
The supernatural Holy Spirit power in you allows victory
Let me tell you, we don’t even have a clue what the Holy Spirit can do in us as we completely surrender

Important for us
Our goal – vision – to impact our communities with the Father’s love, our part of the world
The Block Party
Joy in the Park
Laundry love
We are crazy enough to believe that God is doing something incredibly here

Then that little church became a big church
That day
3,000 were added
The Holy Spirit sets people free, brings them back to life – just like He did that day at Pentecost
I find it more than coincidence that Moses went up on the mountain to receive the law and when he came back down 3,000 people were killed
But when the Holy Spirit moved on the day of Pentecost 3,000 people came to life

Makes me think of last 2 verses of Revelation
“Amen, come Lord Jesus”
When?
Don’t know (plug Kathy’s series)
I don’t know when he’s coming back – I’m not on the planning committee
But I’m on the welcoming committee
I’m ready for that day and I hope you are

Salvation

God is patient to those yet to come
Maybe he’s waiting for you