



# Sermon Questions

September 15, 2024 | Scripture: 1 Thess. 1:4-10 (Joy)

Pre-study: 3 things from the sermon. *Note down 3 ideas, illustrations, quotes, or points that made an impression in the sermon.*

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**WORSHIP THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

Reflect on these Scriptures:  
2 Samuel 6:5-23  
Nehemiah 8:1-12  
Psalm 16  
Isaiah 61  
Matthew 11:1-19  
Philippians 4:4-9  
2 Peter 1:3-15

Serve: Convince another member of your group to come with you to [Equipping for Evangelism](#) on October 5.

Pray: [Join the Mid-Week Prayer Meeting on Wednesday in person at MPC or remotely](#)

## Core Questions

1. "Some of us are more successful than we've ever been **and** unhappier." How do you see the "happiness paradox" in your own life or in society today? What values might be contributing to this tension between success and joy?
2. How does the idea of being joyfully received by God influence your understanding of God's relationship with you? Do you ever feel like God's delight in you has run out?
3. Pastor Ryan summarized the Thessalonians' joyful response as their "joyful resistance" to cultural norms and temptations, "joyful resilience" in the face of pressure, and "joyful repentance." How does the gospel transform each of these usually difficult things into joyful things?

## Inward Grace in Action

4. Joyful repentance is "like turning from saltwater to fresh water." How can repentance become a source of joy in your life, rather than a source of shame or guilt?

## Outward Grace in Action

5. Paul highlights the importance of holiness and "loving fellow Christians, even when they disagreed with them." In what ways can you practice love toward others, especially those with whom you may have differences or disagreements? How does the gospel shape your approach to loving difficult people?

## Additional Resources:

**Reflect:** On the next page, read Michael Reeves' reflection on the love of God and joyful living. Consider how this reality transformed the Thessalonians, how it has transformed you and others you know, and how it might continue to transform us as we come close to God. Pray hopeful, joyful prayers.

Let us consider some well-known words about the Father in 1 John 4. We will focus attention on verses 7–8: “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.” Notice what this passage says: Whoever loves knows God, because God is love.

Have you ever known a dear saint who has been walking with the Lord for years, who just seems to ooze **joyfulness and love and generosity and compassion and kindness**? And you think, *I want to be like that when I am seventy*. Someone whose very presence is gold. You go out for Sunday lunch with them after church or are invited to lunch at their place, and when you are with them, you start finding that you’re really nice around them. Right? Because they are never mean about people behind their backs. And just while you’re with them, you start actually being nicer. (You revert later, of course!) But while you’re with them, they change you.

This is a simple picture of how God is, according to John. God is love, and He is love in such a deep and powerful way that when you know Him you also will become loving. You couldn’t not be loving. **You become what He is**. This is what it means that God is Father. John’s words in verse 8, “God is love,” refer to God the Father. Do you see the next words? Verse 9: “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.” So the God who is love is the Father who sends His Son. *To be Father means to love*. To give out life, to beget the Son. Without love, He would not be who He is. He would not be Father. He would not have a Son to rain a cascade of love over. Simply put, this God is love. To be Father means to have a Son and to love Him eternally.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Reeves, [\*Overflow: How the Joy of the Trinity Inspires Our Mission\*](#) (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2021).