

Day 3

*Joy*

**Silence (2 minutes)** Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

**Scripture** *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."* Hebrews 12:1-3

**Discussion** The author has just named numerous faithful individuals. He now states that since we have so many witnesses they should impact our choices. We are to stay away from anything which is sin or hinders our faithfulness, have endurance in our life of faith, and keep our focus on Jesus. He then writes in verse 2, *"For the joy set before Him He endured the cross..."* We are to keep our focus on Jesus, Who chose to go to the cross based on a joy that was set before Him. What was that joy? The author doesn't say what it is, but for the sake of that joy Jesus chose to endure the cross. Picture Jesus late at night in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prays three times to have the cup removed from Him and three times He submits Himself to the will of the Father. His disciples are sleeping, not praying. Jesus knows that Judas is on the way with soldiers to have Jesus arrested. And Jesus knows what will follow His arrest. But, some sort of joy is so significant that Jesus chooses to stay and endure all the torment of the cross. Most likely the joy is a result of Jesus' death. What are the results of the cross? Jesus has been obedient to the Father, He completed what the Father told Him to do. He has paid the penalty for our sin. If we believe in Him and follow Him, then we are born again and adopted by the Father. Our separation from the Father is ended. *"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross."* (Col. 2:15) And, Jesus ascends into heaven to again be with the Father. Jesus' relationship with the Father, our relationship with Jesus and with the Father, and the disarming of Satan were all mostly likely the joy set before Jesus.

**Application** Consider how the joy of Christ can assist your faith in both endurance and obedience. Is there anything you are facing today that you can draw on the example of Christ's obedience to the Father to assist you in? Just as Christ was obedient to the Father and is our example, we can find joy in our faith knowing we are growing to be more and more Christ-like.

**Prayer** Jesus, thank You for Your willingness to endure the cross. I praise You that You were obedient to the Father. I praise You that You disarmed and publicly triumphed over Satan. And, I thank You that You made it possible for me to be forgiven, to have my separation removed, and to be adopted as the Father's child. Thank You, Jesus, that these were a joy to You. Jesus, please help me to grow in staying away from sin and hindrances. Please help me to have endurance each day in following You. Help me to keep my eyes on You, remembering Your endurance. Thank You, Jesus. Amen.

**Silence (2 minutes)** Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups? Pray for direction.

**Scripture memory** for the week: *"For the joy set before Him He endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."* Hebrews 12:2b-3