

# Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you worshipping with us today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and "at home."

## Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God. The **Lord's Supper** will be observed as part of our worship this morning.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

## Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

## Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

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We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

March 1, 2009

### FIGHT FOR IT

*"Joy in Christ is worth the fight"*  
Deuteronomy 28:47-48a

*Those with a passion will stay stuck for just so long before they begin to fight for the inner, spirit joy they've known before, in contrast to shallow, soulish joy.*

#### 1. IS IT **NECESSARY** TO FIGHT FOR JOY?

**Deuteronomy 28:47-48a** "Because you have not served the LORD your God with joy and enthusiasm for the abundant benefits you have received, you will serve your enemies ..." NLT

- Grateful, joyful and enthusiastic worship is not an option to God.

**Psalms 37:4** "**Delight** yourself **in the Lord** and he will give you the desires of your heart."

**Psalms 32:11** "So **rejoice in the Lord** and **be glad**, all you who obey him! **Shout for joy**, all you whose hearts are pure!" NLT

- Happiness is not only our privilege, but our duty, since He makes it a part of our obedience to be joyful.

#### How necessary is tenaciously fighting for joy?

- If your faith is going to endure with its joy in Christ, you cannot be passive about it. You must take serious initiative and fight for it.

**1 Timothy 6:12** "**Fight** the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called ..."

**Matthew 11:12** (Darby) "the kingdom of the heavens is taken by **violence**, and the **violent seize** on it."

- Your joy will not be rugged and durable if there is no deep resolve to fight for it.

#### 2. HOW DO I **FIGHT** FOR JOY?

- You fight for joy just as you fight for a **close relationship** that brings you joy in your marriage or family.

- Your fight for joy isn't about trying to coerce God to give you His joy. Rather, it is fighting to **position** yourself to be where His joy comes out.

## Digging Deeper

For personal or small group study

Week of March 1, 2009

- You fight for joy by taking drastic action to rearrange your time schedule before others demand your time. And, that is a real fight!

- You fight for joy by seeking to know the reality of who you are -- your strengths and weaknesses -- so you can **adjust** yourself accordingly.

- You fight for joy by seeking simplicity and the sacrificial giving of yourself to others in need -- as Jesus did, over personal comfort.

**Luke 9:23** “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross daily, and follow me.” NLT

- Joy isn’t found in self-denial, but in following Christ with such exclusive devotion.

### 3. FIGHTING FOR JOY WORKS!

- Great godly men through history have discovered the value of fighting for joy ...

- o **John Calvin** said in 1559 that aspiring after happiness in union with God is “the chief activity of the soul.”
- o **Thomas Watson** wrote in 1692 that God counts Himself more glorified when we find more happiness in His salvation.
- o **Jonathan Edwards** argued in 1729 that “Persons need to be endeavoring by all possible ways to inflame their desires and to obtain more spiritual pleasures ... by laying yourself in the way of allurements ...”
- o **John Piper**, who is alive today, wrote that joy in God is the very thing that makes praise an honor to God, and not hypocrisy.

*God is honored and glorified when we find our greatest pleasure in our relationship with Him.*

**2 Corinthians 1:24** “... that does not mean we want to dominate you by telling you how to put your faith into practice. We want to work together with you so you will be full of joy, for it is by your own faith that you stand firm.” NLT

#### Can you say your greatest pleasure is in your relationship with God?

- o If not, what is it that you sense you must fight through in order to have pure joy in your relationship with Christ?
- o The Holy Spirit will set you free from whatever is holding you back, once you get serious enough to fight for His joy.
- o Your challenge is to determine to fight for joy. If you are not doing so already, **will you commit to do that today?**

Did you have an “aha” moment from the sermon or sermon notes? If so, what was it and how did it impact you?

#### GROUP DISCUSSION or PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. Describe the joy you first experienced when you surrendered your heart and life to Jesus. What part does a passion for God and our desire for inner joy play in getting out of a stalled spiritual condition?
2. Why is it necessary to fight for joy? [Deuteronomy 28:47-48; Psalm 32:11; 37:4]
3. Read 1 Timothy 6:12. What part does faith play in receiving inner joy? Is joy something you can create or simply decide to have each day? How does fighting the good fight of faith affect our joy? [Hebrews 11:6]
4. Can you say your greatest pleasure is in your relationship with God? If not, what is it you sense holding you back? Can we truly receive God’s inner spirit joy if we aren’t willing to give up our selfish agenda for His? How do you plan on fighting through to receive the joy God intends for you to have? [Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:13; 2 Corinthians 1:24; Luke 9:23-24; John 15:8-11]
5. Would you say that worry is joy’s greatest enemy? How does worry force us to focus on wrong things? There are three things that will help us in the fight to overcome the worry addiction ... Rejoice, Relax and Rest. Where do you see these concepts found in Philippians 4:4-7? In what ways can they help in your fight for joy?

Author and pastor Chuck Swindoll says that there are three exercises that will help us stay worry free. Discuss these three found in Philippians 4:8-9.

- Feed your mind positive thoughts – v.8
- Focus your attention on encouraging models – v.9a
- Find “the God of Peace” in every circumstance – v.9b

This week, fight the good fight of faith and joy by practicing these three exercises and report back to your group or prayer partner how these exercises impacted your joy.