



# CONNECT GROUP NOTES

## Sunday 18.02.2024

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### “Our Daily Default”

#### **Preacher**

Ps. Adam Dodds

#### **Scripture**

“The Lord reigns, let the earth be glad;  
let the distant shores rejoice.

2 Clouds and thick darkness surround him;  
righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.”

Psalm 97:1-2

#### **Thought**

We're in a message series on 'Joy' at the moment, yet it's hard to actually find a good definition of the word. Most definitions imply that joy is based on external circumstances, yet this differs from the deeper reality of joy which the Bible talks about - a joy that isn't dependent at all on our external circumstances.

So here's an alternative: “Joy is having a daily default of delight and contented cheerfulness as I walk through life with gratitude in one hand, and hope in the other”.

We all have a daily default. This 'default', despite its name, is intentionally cultivated over years. Joy, itself, (as John Mark Comer states) “is a cultivated way of seeing the world”. It's the deliberate consequence of building our lives with certain building blocks. Joy isn't our goal - Christ is, yet as we move to become more Christ-like and build His principles into our lives, we find joy being built.



Dallas Willard says “You must arrange your life so you are experiencing deep contentment, joy and confidence in your everyday life with God”.

Yet how do we do this when life’s circumstances don’t always go well? Psalm 97 reminds us that we can rejoice in merely knowing that the Lord reigns.

It doesn’t always look this way, but we know that there is more going on than we can see. There is a higher sovereignty and in the long run, God reigns. He, and He alone bends the arc of the moral universe towards justice. Yet we live in the in-between. God’s reign is present and powerful, but not yet complete. Life’s difficulties are not ordained by God. Injustice is not ordained by God, yet in the midst of the challenges and brokenness of life, we can be certain of a God who brings complete restoration, justice and joy - a work which begins in this life and finds its ultimate and complete fulfilment in the light of eternity.

His reign is righteous and good. God is exactly like Jesus, He’s bigger than the grave, He’s self-giving, He’s gentle, He’s loving - and He’s also powerful, He reigns over all, He has power over life and death.

This is not about resigning to life’s situations. When we pray into His will and reign, it brings change. We pray for change, we pray for miracles, we ask to hear from God, we ask Him to intervene. Yet ultimately we are the ones who fall into alignment with His kingdom, presenting our requests, believing for change, yet knowing that He and He alone is sovereign, all-knowing, just, gracious and wise. In the end, it’s not our strength that bends the arc of the moral universe towards justice, It’s His.

When we truly meditate on this truth, it brings inner change. Not just intellectual agreement, but allowing this thought to be planted deep in the seedbed of our hearts, growing into a blossoming bouquet of limitless joy.

May this become our daily default: That the Lord reigns, let all the world rejoice.



### **Discussion Points**

1. It has been said that “God’s reign is present and powerful, but not yet complete”. What do you think this means?
2. Why do you think that meditating on God’s sovereignty and reign is important for cultivating a deep joy?
3. What does God’s goodness and justice mean for me, in my current season and situation?

### **Personal application + Prayer**

Dear Lord,

May I truly know the depths of your merciful reign in my life.

Amen.