

## THURSDAY, MARCH 15

PSALM 45:7; PSALM 97:11; JOHN 15:10-11

Pursuing holiness is hard. If we are honest, giving in to our flesh is easier than abiding with the Spirit. So why should we pursue holiness? We should pursue holiness because there is so much joy in being right where God wants us to be. When we pursue God and his holiness, we have abounding joy. There are so many other good reasons why we should pursue holiness - Jesus died to give us righteousness, our intimacy with God depends on it, because other people are watching us, and more - but joy is one of those results we often miss. To resist holiness or to be half-hearted about its pursuit is to forfeit true joy and to settle for something less than we were created for.

The Psalmists were writing to those who no longer had the safety of a Davidic reign. Instead, they were in exile, in a country they didn't recognize. Life was neither easy nor good, yet the Psalmist called for the people to be devoted to Yahweh anyway. They had an assurance of a great King who reigns and cares for his own. When God's people pursue his holiness, there is joy regardless of the circumstances.

Jesus was headed in the same direction with his thoughts found in John 15. Our joy is complete when we follow God's commands. However hard the Christian life is, there is joy in both the journey and in the goal. There is joy in doing the right thing. We are redeemed sinners, and if we abide in Jesus and pursue the holiness and righteousness he died to give us, then we can find true joy.

Are you lacking in joy today? If so, maybe you need to refresh your pursuit of the vine and his holiness. Read all of John 15:1-17 for more about this relationship between the vine and the branches.