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CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Looking Ahead - Unshakeable Joy

August 31, 2025

## 1 John 1:4

*We are writing these things so that you may fully share our joy.*

So often, we chase after joy by trying to be "good enough." We hope that if we perform enough good deeds, avoid enough mistakes, or fulfill enough requirements, God will be pleased with us. John's words in the book of 1 John remind us that absolute joy isn't found in our efforts, but rather, in what Jesus has already accomplished through his death and resurrection.

That's why John points us back to the source of lasting joy. It's not found in our performance, but in God's grace. When we shift our focus and place our trust entirely in what Jesus has already done, we begin to see salvation for what it truly is: a gift we could never earn.

If you've ever wondered whether you're "enough" for God, the truth is, you don't have to be. Jesus already is. When you ground and root your identity in him, joy is no longer fragile or temporary - it's unshakable.

## Discussion Questions:

**Ice Breaker:** What's something that always brings you joy or makes you feel secure?

As a community of believers, how can we better reflect the confidence we have in Jesus and point others to him?

**Read 1 John 5:11-13:** According to this passage, what does it mean to "have the Son," and how does that truth give us confidence in our faith and future?

How does the assurance and the knowledge that you can know Jesus personally shape your choices, your priorities, and your relationships?

**Reflect and Respond:** Because of Jesus, our eternity is already secure, and unshakeable joy is always available. What's one step you can take this week to remind yourself that eternal life isn't something you have to earn?

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, I am incredibly thankful for all you have so freely given me. Even when I focus on being enough for you, the truth found in the Bible is right there, pointing me back to a better way to follow you. I'm also thankful for this time I get to spend with you in prayer, seeking your guidance in my life, so that I can continue to do my best modeling the love for others that you showed us when you lived among us. Please help guide me back when I wander down that path of "am I enough?" again. I love you, I trust you, and I worship you. Amen.*

**Series Theme Verse:****Psalms 16:11**

*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.*

## **The Downside in All of This - Unshakeable Joy**

**September 1, 2025**

**New Testament Reading Plan: 1 Corinthians 1**

New battery in my car ... check!

(The last one died unexpectedly.)

New brakes ... check!

(They were creaking.)

New front end after an accident ... check!

(Let's all slow down and pay attention!)

Driving a rental car ... check!

(Kicking the car for not knowing how to open the gas tank and the tire light teasing me.)

New job opportunities ... check!

(Sink or swim!)

Additional things I could add to the list ... check!

All this has happened in just the last 6 months or so! I am truly fortunate it's all been taken care of. But the downside is that I've been left feeling behind and uprooted, wondering when the chaos will end.

As we wrapped up our series, *Unspeakable Joy*, we were reminded to stay rooted in Christ so that we may find joy in light of our eternity, and despite our circumstances.

Finding joy can be challenging when unexpected things happen. These difficult circumstances and continual chaos often rob us of our joy. However, if we change our perspective and focus on Christ - not our worldly circumstances - we can experience real joy here and now. Because through Jesus, eternal life is not something uncertain or distant, but a present reality given through him.

### **1 John 5:11-13**

*"And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God's Son does not have life.*

*I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.*

Joy is found when we clearly see and embrace our identity in Christ. We can endure all our battles with confidence and assurance, knowing whose we are and who Jesus is.

**The bottom line:** *Unshakeable joy comes from new life in Jesus now.*

Take a moment to let this sink in: joy is not something we achieve by striving harder, but something we receive by knowing Jesus.

So, if you find yourself deeply entangled in the chaos of your circumstances rather than the presence of the one who loves you and offers you eternal life, repeat after me:

*I am rooted in Jesus Christ.*

*I am a new creation.*

*I have everything I need in him.*

*I have unshakeable joy because my eternity with Jesus starts now.*

### **Questions:**

What is one truth you know about God that keeps you rooted?

What is something eternal you are focusing on?

What is keeping you from knowing God?

### **Next Steps:**

If you find yourself in the midst of chaos, take a breath, hold on to what God says, and let go of the distractions.

Take a meaningful step to grow your relationship with God. Is it time to go public with your faith through baptism? Are you ready to learn about your God-given gifts in GrowthTrack?

### **Prayer:**

*God, there is a lot of chaos happening around me that I cannot control. I really need a break. I pray I will hold on to you, stay rooted in who you are and who you created me to be. I am in Christ, I seek out what is eternal, and I will live with confidence, assurance, and unshakable joy. Amen.*

### **Series Theme Verse:**

#### **Psalm 16:11**

*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

*This post was written by Becca Roberts, a West attendee, and a regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

## **Remain in Me**

September 2, 2025

### **New Testament Reading Plan: 1 Corinthians 2**

Have you ever met someone who just radiates joy? You know, the people whose kindness and joy are contagious. The ones who remain positive and faithful, even during hardships.

Through conversations, I have found they often have one thing in common - they are fully rooted in Christ. And because they are firmly planted in Jesus,

they are no longer slaves to the things of this world or their negative emotions.

True, unshakeable joy only comes from the true source of light – Jesus. He is the one who offers a joy that is unwavering and can weather any storm. We can all share in this unshakeable joy with Jesus through the new life he offers us.

Once we become Christ followers – through faith not our own works – Christ’s light shines through us and we want our behavior and actions to glorify him. That is the fruit of the Spirit. By fulfilling God’s will, we follow his path, the only way to find a life that is full and complete.

### **John 15:5, John 15:7-8**

*“Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing.... But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.”*

In this passage, Jesus tells us to remain in him at all times. Like the branches growing from the vine, we are connected to the source of unshakeable joy if we hold onto Christ. We are his true disciples when we place our joy and faith in God’s hands and align our will with his. The result is a heart that seeks what he wants.

Jesus is where our joy and trust is rooted. Staying rooted in Jesus is about staying close to his heart, learning from Scripture, listening to promptings from the Holy Spirit, and trusting him. As verses like Romans 8:28 assure us, even though life will not always be perfect, we can rest knowing that God is working out all things for those who love him and will carry out his plan for our lives.

Let us never forget the only true, unshakeable joy we experience is through the Lord himself!

### **Questions:**

Who is someone you have met that radiates unshakeable joy?

What spiritual fruit is God producing in your life?

**Next Steps:**

Join a Group this fall semester to connect with a community of like-minded Christ followers who place their joy and trust in Jesus Christ.

Attend GrowthTrack to find out where you can use the fruit that God is producing in your life to help serve others.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for offering me the true, unshakeable joy that can only be found through Jesus. Help me to remain in you, and remind me that you will remain in me, even when things get difficult. Develop in me the true joy that can only come from you, and help me use it to inspire others and draw them nearer to you. In Jesus' name, amen.*

**Series Theme Verse:****Psalm 16:11**

*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever..*

*This post was written by Isabelle Billnitzer, a Perrysburg attendee and regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

## **First Class ... Or Coach?**

**September 3, 2025**

**New Testament Reading Plan: 1 Corinthians 3**

Several years ago, one of the major airlines comped me a first class seat because my flight was overbooked. Before coach had finished boarding, I was enjoying a delicious meal and drinks. Wow - the flight attendants really wait on you hand and foot! Even with the hefty \$\$\$ price tag, I'd still highly recommend trying first class at least once!

So, what if you discovered that you could find even more incredible opportunities for joy ... for free ... at any time? Only Jesus offers a first class ticket to real contentment.

The truth is when we have a personal relationship with Jesus, we become

rooted in him. We abide in him, and he in us. As our faith grows, we remain joyful in him, even during difficult times (John 15:9-11).

It's easy to think we will find joy by taking our own path, identifying with our career, work, or marriage. We can fall into the tendency of accepting that this life stinks and resign ourselves to experiencing joy after we die and go to heaven. We've all experienced difficult times ... and will again throughout this life. We must remember that unshakeable joy rests on a foundation of peace.

### **John 16:33**

*"I have told you these things, so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."*

When we abide in God we begin to experience *eternal living*! This is the joy of having *new life* now! Joy isn't some future reality when we are rooted in Jesus. What a tedious and fruitless life it can become even for Christians who have their salvation. We can easily become rooted in who we think we should be, which inherently robs us of our joy (John 15:5-6).

Ultimately, we must remain confident in our identity in Christ. It's easy to do when things are going our way, but how do we hold up during the storms that are sure to come? Confidence is not the absence of doubt but knowing where you're rooted when doubt creeps in. What can we do?

This is the perfect time to take a new step of obedience - knowing that unshakeable joy comes from new life now.

The thing is, we have new life. We just need to live in it.

There's no extra charge to fly first class!

### **Questions:**

When do you find it most challenging to let God be the vine?

How do you pivot when your confidence is shaken?

### **Next Steps:**

Write down 2-3 ways you have been called/nudged to abide.



Next time you feel shaky, uncertain, or restless in your faith, dive into one of these on your list.

**Prayer:**

*Dear heavenly father - our Lord, Creator, and King - thank you for the precious gift of a new life now! Thank you for how your Holy Spirit nudges me into the obedience that brings a foundation of peace and unshakeable joy. Let your light shine through me as I go out and share the incredible news of your Son, my Lord, Jesus. Amen.*

**Series Theme Verse:**

**Psalm 16:11**

*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

*This post was written by Nick Thomas, a Findlay attendee, and a regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

## **Choose Jesus and Find Joy**

**September 4, 2025**

### **New Testament Reading Plan: 1 Corinthians 4**

Life can be extremely hard at times. So how do we find joy when things are hard?

We often confuse happiness and joy. Happiness is fleeting and based on our circumstances, while joy is a deep and unshakable contentment, rooted in God's presence not our circumstances. When we focus on the situation, it's easy to become obsessed with solving the issue.

I can say from experience that this is a terrible way to live. Focusing on the problems and creating worst case scenarios in our heads causes tunnel vision, and we end up missing out on all of God's blessings in our lives.

Praise God he lifted me out of my pit and restored me through Jesus. Now, I choose to focus on Jesus and trust him in all situations. My faith in him fills me with peace, joy, and contentment.

He wants to do the same for all of us! He came to give us a joy-filled life.

**John 10:10**

*"The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."*

The only way to have a rich and satisfying life is to seek him first and obey him. Then we can sit back in amazement and watch him work.

**Matthew 6:33**

*Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.*

When we seek him first he changes us. We realize God is our loving Daddy who wants what is best for our lives. We must choose to focus on Jesus instead of the temporary things of this world. As we grow in faith and trust, we are able to surrender everything to him.

We sing praise and worship songs instead of grumbling and complaining.

We find peace in meditating on his Word instead of our troubles.

We let him lead and work in our lives.

We live in true freedom because we are confident that our lives now and for eternity are secure.

We are so overwhelmed with gratitude and joy we have to tell everyone what he has done for us. Our greatest desire is for everyone to experience God's love, peace, contentment, and joy.

And everyone said, "AMEN"!

**Questions:**

What is your main focus?

What steps do you need to take to live a joy filled life?

How are you seeking the Kingdom of God first?

**Next Steps:**

Listen and sing praise music. (I suggest ["Gifts from God"](#) by Chris Tomlin, featuring Chris Lane.)

Meditate on your favorite verses.

Share God's love with others.

**Prayer:**

*Daddy, I am overwhelmed with joy because of you. I trust you. Help me to seek you first and live righteously. I am so grateful that the God of the universe loves me so much and has a perfect plan for my life. I trust you and surrender everything to you. I know my present, future, and eternity are secure in you. I worship and praise you, amen.*

**Series Theme Verse:**

**Psalms 16:11**

*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

*This post was written by Marsha Raymond, an Oregon attendee, and a regular contributor to the Daily LivingItOut.*

# **Steadied and Rooted**

**September 5, 2025**

## **New Testament Reading Plan: 1 Corinthians 5**

What makes you feel unsteady or unsure? It could be a fear of failure, past rejection, unmet expectations, or simply the unknown.

These shaky moments don't only impact our everyday life, they often infiltrate our faith journey as well. We begin to wonder if we're enough, if God really sees us, or if joy is something we'll ever truly experience.

If you're feeling that way, I encourage you to stop right where you are and remember *whose* you are. When we are in a relationship with Jesus, it changes everything, and it redefines our source of joy.

Absolute joy, the deep, unshakeable kind of joy, is rooted in God's presence, not in our performance or the outcome of our plans.

When we see ourselves as the chosen, loved, and redeemed person who Jesus sees, it brings with it empowerment and a new kind of strength. The storms may come, but they no longer define the status of our joy. The disappointments may sting, but they can't shake the foundation of who you are in Christ.

Paul reminds us of this truth in Philippians 4:4: *"Always be full of joy in the Lord. I say it again - rejoice!"*

Notice that he says joy comes *in the Lord*, not in perfect circumstances. Even though Paul wrote this letter from prison to the Church in Philipp, he found unshakable joy because of his relationship with Christ.

Recently, I've been listening to Josiah Queen's new song, "Can't Steal My Joy." I don't know what Josiah or the writers were going through when they wrote this song, but there are a few verses in the lyrics that fit so well with all we've been learning in the *Unshakeable Joy* series:

*"What the world couldn't give, no, it can't take away*

*Sorrow may come, but it can't steal my joy*

*Can't steal my joy*

*In the high highs, in the low lows*

*You fill my cup, You fill it up until it overflows*

*I remember, I'll keep holding onto hope*

*'Cause you're the King of rolling stones"*

Take a moment today to remember your true identity according to Jesus. Speak it over your life, stand steadied in it, and build a deeply rooted relationship with him. Because when you know who you are in him, you'll find joy that *fills your cup until it overflows* and is unshakeable!

### **Questions:**

Ask yourself: Where am I seeking confidence? Is it in my success, my relationships, or the approval of others? Or is it in the unchanging truth of who I am in Christ?

### **Next Steps:**

Take a few quiet moments to reflect on what it means that you belong to Jesus. Research, look back on past LivingItOut devotionals, and find scripture that reminds you of your identity in him and then write it down. Place it somewhere you will see it and commit it to memory. Because the world will try to steal your joy, but if you remain rooted in the truth, you will remain steadied!

### **Prayer:**

Jesus, thank you for choosing me, and for giving me a place to belong to your family. Help me to live today with that confidence and joy. I love you, I trust you, and I worship you. Amen.

### **Series Theme Verse:**

#### **Psalms 16:11**

*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.*

## **Reflections - Unshakeable Joy**

**September 6, 2025**

#### **Hebrews 13:15**

*Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.*

The end of a series doesn't mean the end of the journey. Don't let the close of *Unshakeable Joy* be the moment you stop searching for the joy God promises. Life is complicated, messy, and often uncertain. But even in the middle of that, we are invited to know God personally, to walk daily in his truth, and to experience a love that reshapes our lives from the inside out.

Unshakeable joy isn't found in ignoring struggles or pretending everything is fine. It's found in anchoring our hearts to the one who never changes. As we continue to follow Jesus beyond this series, let's lean into his presence, open our hearts to his Word, and remember that his love is the source of a joy that nothing in this world can take away.

The invitation is ongoing, and unshakeable joy is still available. Keep seeking it - and keep pursuing him!

**Prayer:**

*Jesus, thank you for the gift of unshakeable joy that only comes from you. Help me continue to seek your presence beyond this series, to walk in your truth, and to rest in the love that changes everything. Amen.*

**Series Theme Verse:**

**Psalm 16:11**

*You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.*

*This post was written by Lori Tuckerman, Director of Content for the Daily LivingItOut.*