

Taking It Home:

- This week divide up your daily Scripture reading by reading the *Songs of Ascent* in the Psalms. Start with Psalms 120 and read through Psalm 134. These particular Psalms reflect times that the OT Hebrew community of believers approached the tabernacle and temple with celebration, dancing, singing, and rejoicing because of the faithfulness and goodness of the Lord God.

- What does it mean for you to intentionally and deliberately set aside times of celebration and rejoicing for Jesus Christ's continual goodness in your life? Is it difficult for you to celebrate and rejoice in the Lord or do you look forward to times of celebration with other believers?

- Make a list of everything the Lord Jesus Christ has blessed you with in the past year. Have you paused to reflect a heart of rejoicing and celebration?

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

Living Above and Beyond
Living Above and Beyond with Extravagant Rejoicing
Deuteronomy 26:10-11

Dr. Matthew R. St. John
Bethel Church
January 22, 2012

Living Above and Beyond with Extravagant Rejoicing

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelfc.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of January 22, 2012

Deuteronomy 26:10-11

Quick Review: Because of the intersection of God's generosity and ours, we bow before Him with rejoicing. Material generosity is a tangible demonstration of worship. While the world appeases, we give with joy and without condition. We desire others to be caught up in our joy & celebration before the Lord.

My Story:

- Share an experience about a time when your favorite football, baseball or basketball team won a championship? Talk about the rejoicing and emotions welling up inside of you? How did you celebrate?
- Describe a time when you felt the indescribable joy and awe about giving selflessly to a "cause" because you knew it was truly helping someone with no strings attached. Describe how you felt. Was it necessary to be acknowledged for giving selflessly? Why? Why Not?
- What does it look like when you celebrate and rejoice in the Lord's goodness? Discuss.

Growing Deeper:

- What does it mean to "*Live above and beyond with Extravagant Rejoicing*" in the Lord?
- Rejoicing and celebrating within the community of believers (the Body of Christ—the Church) is a normal and common reality. Name some ways that we, here at **Bethel Church** rejoice and celebrate the goodness of Jesus Christ and His working within our Church; **Example:** Child dedications. Name some other ways believers at Bethel rejoice and celebrate as a community of believers.
- Deuteronomy 26:10-12 has a deep dimension of trusting and surrendering totally to God, depending upon Him for everything, giving Him our "first fruits" with gladness and joy and being engaged with the community of believers in extravagant rejoicing at His goodness. Make a list of the ways that Pastor Matthew shared with us how the ancient Hebrews (according to the *Mishna*) celebrated and rejoiced as a community of believers the celebration of "First Fruits."
- Pastor Matthew stated that a person cannot genuinely rejoice or celebrate the Lord God unless they have a consecrated, pure heart that is transformed by Him. A part of the deep devotion and surrender to God by a believer is to come before Him with clean hands (cleansing of all outward acts of sin) and a pure heart (a transformed heart surrendered to God). **READ Psalm 24:3-4; Matthew 5:8 and James 4:7-10 and interpret those verses.** What is God asking for a believer to do?
- The Apostle Paul stated in Philippians 4:4, "*rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice.*" What does Paul mean by that statement? Does that mean a believer can rejoice "*in the Lord*" even when things in their life are not good? Is it possible for a non-believer to rejoice in the Lord? **Rejoice** – Greek: Chairō – "gladness of heart; joy in the Lord."
- Pastor Matthew stated that the leaders of the OT Hebrew community of believers (overseers) placed a very high value on celebration and rejoicing in the Lord during the celebration of "first Fruits." Christian celebration and times of rejoicing in the early church were shaped by the spiritual leaders in the church. Why is it important for the spiritual leaders of Bethel Church to lead the congregation in times of rejoicing and celebration of our awesome God?