

We Serve a God of Celebrations

I. How God Defines Celebration

- **How the world celebrates.** According to Merriam-Webster, to celebrate has a number of meanings — for example: “to perform a sacrament or solemn ceremony publicly and with appropriate rites, to honor an occasion such as a holiday especially by solemn ceremonies or by refraining from ordinary business, to mark something such as an anniversary by festivities or other deviation from routine, to hold up or play up for public notice, to observe a holiday, perform a religious ceremony, take part in a festival, or simply to observe a notable occasion with festivities.”
- **How God celebrates.**
 - Luke 15:32; Romans 15:10; Deuteronomy 32:43; Philippians 4:4
 - In Luke 15:32, the word translated “celebrate” appears to be an outward manifestation whereas the word translated “rejoice” is more of an inward reality.
 - Here’s the key difference between the world’s understanding of celebration and God’s understanding of celebration. *What* is being celebrated, *why*, and *how often*?
 - According to Romans 15, there is nothing better to celebrate than God’s gracious salvation offered to the Gentiles. How should God’s people respond to the salvation He offers the nations? We are to praise Him and celebrate Him!
 - God’s definition of celebration definitely includes the setting aside of our normal activities to observe holidays and feasts, but — to a necessary degree — it includes celebrating all the right things in the right ways for the right reasons in the right power.
 - The Year Long Celebration of God rests firmly on the premise that God should be celebrated in all things in all ways at all times.

II. How God Created Celebration

- **God created rest from work.**
 - Genesis 2:2-3
 - God set a standard for all mankind by working consistently over the course of six days. But God specially designed for the week to be seven days long. The word translated “rest” means to bring something to an end. God refrained from the normal business of the week by resting.
 - Not only that, but He also *blessed* the seventh day and sanctified it. This is unique because the only other things the Bible says God uniquely blessed after creating them were Adam and Eve. He didn’t bless the earth or the animals or the stars or anything else. He only blessed mankind and the seventh day.
 - But we’re also told that He sanctified it. To sanctify something is to set it apart — to consecrate it for special purposes. This is the same Hebrew word often translated “holy.”
 - So, the first observation is that God created the seventh day to be a unique day where the normal busyness of life is set aside.
 - That Saturday celebration was the first evidence we see of people taking time to put aside the regular business of life to honor and observe God. And God expects that to happen every week.
- **All heaven rejoices when a person chooses to follow Christ.**
 - Luke 15:10

- Every time a person chooses to believe God's promises, every time an individual is born again and becomes a follower of Christ, the multitude of heavenly hosts rejoice. Those angelic beings turn their attention to God and praise Him for the grace and mercy and miracle that is His salvation.
- There is nothing more amazing in the entire universe than the fact that the almighty, all-powerful God of the universe Who needs nothing would ever save an undeserving human who brings nothing good to the relationship.
- That is worthy of much celebration!
- **God created countless opportunities for His people to worship Him.**
 - **Old Testament Organized Celebrations**
 - The Old Testament is filled with feast days and celebrations and sacrifices and ceremonies.
 - For the Jews, that encompassed sacrificing from out of their material possessions, sacrificing from out of their time, and even sacrificing from out of their cultural choices like where they lived and how they dressed.
 - **New Testament Organized Celebrations**
 - Did you know that assembling every week with your local body of believers on Sunday is a celebration?
 - The first century believers started meeting together on Sunday for their corporate worship instead of Saturday because that was the day Christ rose from the dead! What better day could there be to weekly memorialize that glorious victory over sin and death?!
 - But the Lord also instituted two sacraments — namely the Lord's Supper which celebrates the atonement and Baptism which proclaims our acceptance of salvation.
 - But even beyond the organized, corporate feasts and observances of the Old and New Testaments, God reveals that our worship should be individual and perpetual.
 - **Daily Worship**
 - I Corinthians 10:31; Revelation 19:7-9
 - God calls us to moment-by-moment worship Him for He is. Every choice we make is an opportunity to either glorify God or glorify self.
 - And that's why the Father forbade the Jews from observing the pagan festivities of their time. The surrounding nations weren't partying to the glory of the one, true God, they were proclaiming the Failure Philosophies of self — often through the practice of worshipping false gods. But Christians are called to make their every decision based off God's will for their lives.
- **God will consummate eternity with a celebration.**
 - Revelation 19:7-9 *"Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." 8 It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he *said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'"*
 - God loves a good celebration. He's the Author, Source, and Object of all worthwhile celebration . . . and no one throws a feast like God does.