

The Power of Joy

Nehemiah 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

Beloved where does our joy come from? How do we sustain it through difficult times? How are we to walk in joy through trials and tribulations? We must consider where our joy comes from and how do we maintain it. I submit that joy is not based on emotion although it brings about happiness in its due time; but rather joy is based upon and born through our FOCUS on the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

The Genesis of Joy

Isaiah 12:2-3 2Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. 3 Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

The beginning of our joy is in our salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ; “in believing”, in trusting, and abounding “in hope” through “the power of the Holy Ghost”. Beloved God’s grace and our joy empower us to do His Will in times of plenty and in times of famine.

Joy in the Trials; Focus on Jesus

We must consider the troubles of life that we all must endure upon this earth cursed with sin and death. There is a distinction to be made between trials and temptations and their source. God will not tempt us with evil. The trials of our faith are from God and are for our perfecting and growth in the faith. Temptations are from the devil and meant to do us harm and are for our destruction.

James 1:13-16 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. 16 Do not err, my beloved brethren. - Remember Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:1-6) and King David (2 Samuel 11:1-5) God will never tempt you to sin.

However we are told to joy in temptations. This may seem strange but let us look closer for God has many wonderful things to reveal about our Joy in trials and temptations.

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

The word ‘temptations’ in the above verse means ‘putting to proof, adversity’; this may seem strange that we should joy during these times and it may be even harder to understand how can we have joy during these times of testing and adversity? But to maintain our joy we must focus not on the trial or adversity but on Jesus

James 1:3-4 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

We must focus on Jesus that our joy remains while He works His perfect will in our lives; in Jesus there is purpose in the pain and as it says in the above verse “worketh patience” the word patience means cheerful (or hopeful) endurance, constancy. We count it all joy by keeping our focus not on the obstacle before us but by focusing on the Lord Jesus. Beloved there is a big difference in pain with purpose and pain without purpose; recognizing that and maintaining our joy by focusing on Jesus is how we keep our joy. Remember:

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

Romans 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

Joy In the Lords Presence

Another key to maintaining joy and the power it brings into our lives is understanding that joy comes with being in the LORDS presence. I am not referring to Him being in our presence but rather us being in His presence. For we know that the LORD is everywhere and he beholds all things and is continually present.

Proverbs 15:3 The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good.

Jeremiah 23:24 Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the LORD. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the LORD.

Hebrews 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

It is we that leave the LORDS presence; again I say it's not a matter of Him being in our presence but of us being in His presence! Are we engaged with Him, seeking Him, worshipping Him, Serving Him? We leave His presence when we forsake His ways and we cannot have joy without being in His presence in our daily lives; living in His will and bearing fruit for His Kingdom. Our being in His presence is where our joy resides.

John 15:4-11 4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. 5 I am the vine, ye *are* the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. 8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. 9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. 10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. 11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and *that* your joy might be full.

Psalms 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

We must abide in Him and be in His presence for that is where our joy is found and secured; it is in His love that our joy springs forth and we can bear much fruit that our Heavenly Father may be Glorified.

Joy in the Focus and not the Feeling

What I say may seem strange but our Joy must come from our focus on the LORD JESUS CHRIST for that is the beginning and endurance of our Joy. Feelings change and sin feels good and you can be happy as a sinner; but Joy is maintained from our focus on Jesus. Many things the lost person can find happiness in but I speak of joy which can bring about happiness but it can only endure through our focus on the LORD. Consider:

Hebrews 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Beloved there was no joy for Jesus as he endured the cross; where is joy in being beaten beyond recognition (Isaiah 52:14) being scourged and mocked (John 19:1-6) and nailed to a cross and crucified (Matthew 27:25). But Jesus did find joy through the trial, the pain, and the shame because His focus was on the outcome. The outcome was the "joy

that was set before Him” the joy in redeeming the lost that would believe on Him; the joy of His salvation being offered to mankind, the joy of forgiveness; the joy of eternal life for those that will believe! Oh, don’t you see! His focus was not on the crown of thorns or the nails driven into Him; His focus was on us! Oh what love the Father has for His Children and “for the joy set before Him” we are His joy and He is our Joy. You want to find joy and keep it? Then remember from whence it comes - “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our Faith”

1Peter 1:7-9 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

Our joy is in the LORD JESUS CHRIST who must be our focus; He is our rock and never changes. In an ever changing world He never does and He must be our focus and joy – whom having not seen, ye love; though now ye see him not, yet believing; ye rejoice with joy!

JESUS SAVES-To God be the Glory

R.E.G.