

December 13, 2015

Joy - The Lords Truth  
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Joy is one of the things that is celebrated at least once a year by many, but to the Christian believer, joy needs to be celebrated daily and as we partake of His benefits, we are reminded of the price that Jesus paid because Father God was willing to sacrifice Him. The willingness of Jesus to come to us and the willingness of Mary and Joseph to do what God had spoken to her about, the supernatural birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan loves to steal our joy and when he does, it causes us to be discouraged and have a tendency to want others sympathy and for them to feel sorry for us and what we may be going through. Jesus or God is the object of a believers joy and when we get our eyes off of the Them, we will begin to lose that joy.

Luke 2:10-14 "And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of **great joy, which shall be to all people**. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." KJV

When reading the entire story of Mary and the birth of Jesus, we can see all the trials that she encountered, which could have caused her much discomfort and yet she continued to look forward to what the angel had told her regarding the birth.

Pastor Margaret shared a recent experience that she had gone through, referring to Luke 10 and the story of Martha. She realized that she had a tendency, around the holidays to take on the Martha personality, wanting to please her family and provide for them the best that she could, however, she had reached a place with her desire to please, that she lost sight of the joy she should have been experiencing and instead was taking on a "poor me" attitude, after speaking all that was on her heart about what had transpired, she began to realize that her joy was gone, as she began to worship and praise the Lord, the joy returned and the attitude that she had allowed to almost overtake her had vanished. Reminding us that we must be able to praise the Lord for everything, not the bad thing that is happening, but the result of what the Lord was going to do in the situation.

1 Thess 5:16-18 "Rejoice always *and* delight in your faith; 17 be unceasing *and* persistent in prayer; 18 in every situation [no matter what the circumstances] be thankful *and* continually give thanks *to God*; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus" AMP

Learning to develop the correct attitude of gratefulness in the midst of adversity is challenging. This is a principle that having learned it earlier in our lives sometimes has to be rekindled and brought back to our remembrance as situations arise. The ability of being thankful in the midst of everything is a working part and a measure of our faith that we are believing God for, knowing that everything will work out alright.

Pastor shared an experience that had happened years before, regarding a plane that had been wrecked and the expense involved of getting it fixed, they questioned their attitudes of what had happened and were they going to be complaining, not knowing how they would meet the expenses or would they praise the Lord, knowing that He had a plan and if they would do what they knew to do, the bad situation would turn around for their good, as it did and everything would work out for them. They turned to praise and worship and the miracle they needed became theirs. They didn't praise the Lord for the situation, but what would be done in the midst of the situation.

If we complain about a situation, we will remain but if we praise we will be raised. This is so true in just living life itself.

Psa 77:3 "I remembered God, and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Selah" KJV

Jesus has come and overcome the world for us, bringing great joy to us.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." KJV

Psa 103:1 "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name." KJV

Psa 104:33-34 "I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. 34 My meditation of him shall be sweet: I will be glad in the Lord." KJV

The believers focus of joy must be from the Lord because in His presence is fullness of joy.

Neh 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." KJV

Jer 15:16 "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." KJV

It is important that we realize the need to be in a daily relationship with Jesus, setting ourselves apart, being in His presence and feasting on His word, though the situation might be for a short period of time, we must learn how to have a joyful heart.

Luke 17 tells of the 10 lepers who were healed, but how only 1 came back with a grateful heart for being healed. We must have grateful hearts, thanking God for everything. Paul and Silas in Matthew 12 speaks, how at midnight, even though they had received harsh treatment, were able to praise the Lord, having grateful hearts and what the result of their actions were causing many people to be saved.

The book of Jonah tells of how the Lord had spoken to him, telling him to go to a certain place, preach to the people, but because Jonah knew Gods ways, knew that He would do to the people what Jonah told them by punishing them, Jonah chose not to be obedient and because he had a pride problem, he chose to ignore God and head in a different direction, he ended up being thrown into the sea during a storm, was swallowed up by a large fish and continued there for 3 days, until he realized the situation that he was in was because of his own doing, he repented and began to praise the Lord which in turn allowed the fish to spit him out on dry ground.

Reading the book will give the entire story.

Jonah 2:1 "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly," KJV

Jonah prayed in the midst of the situation even though it was because of his wrong choices.

Jonah 2:7-8 "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy." KJV

Jonah knew that God would hear his prayer and was convinced that God would deliver him. Jonah changed his focus, he quit seeing the impossibilities of getting out of the fish and begin to see how things could be changed. He began to praise God in the midst of the situation. Many times we praise God for the situation and not the answer to the situation. Accidents, misfortunes and sickness does not come from God, but from the enemy.

1 Peter 1:6-8 "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 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:" KJV

We will go through seasons, maybe because of wrong choices that have been made, either in our lives or that of others, remembering to praise the Lord always, not for the situation but for the answers that will come. Always having thanksgiving in our hearts and right attitudes. Sometimes our belief system will be tried or challenged in what we believe, when this happens we must begin to rejoice and it will enable us to have the victory.

2 Cor 4:16-18 "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." KJV

Our challenges are for only a short time, but the end result will be forever. Temporal means that the situation is subject to change. There is a higher truth, His name is Jesus.

Acts 16:25-26 "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. 26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed." KJV

Earlier in the 16th chapter of Acts, the entire story of what had happened with Paul and Silas is told, but the final part of the story tells of what their attitudes were regarding their situation. Their story is in comparison to that of Jonah. There is power in praise during adversity. In Psalms we are told that God comes down and inhabits the praise of His people and when this happens there is nothing that can withstand the answers He gives to us.

During this season of our lives, we are a blessed people, let's serve God with cheerfulness and gladness of heart, developing an attitude of continual praise, worship and thanksgiving, in everything.

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