

Session # 3

The Enjoyment of Spirituality -- The Joy of the Lord

Introduction

A. What would you say of a person for whom God Himself would die and pay his debt -- who would be accepted by God, forgiven, given righteousness and great promises, and assured of a welcome in Heaven and eternal bliss?

1. We would say that person should be the most thankful and happiest person alive -- and should live in constant enjoyment of God Himself.
2. Every Christian has such a relationship with God and should therefore be that thankful and happy person -- enjoying God.

B. Sad to say -- we are too often characterized by gloom and doom. Shame on us.

C. God expects us to have His joy -- for our good and His glory. (Rom. 5:10,11)

I. The Joy of the Lord is Based on a Personal Relationship with Jesus Christ.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be full. John 15:11

Comment: This verse is part of the Farwell Discourse. The Lord Jesus was teaching the disciples about their union with Himself. A practice of this relationship will bring His joy.

II. The Joy of the Lord is Supposed to Accompany our Prayer Life.

Hitherto have you asked nothing in my name, ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:24

Comment: Christianity has been designed to work. One of the most valuable areas of our life is prayer. For too many of us prayer is largely meaningless and dull. We must learn to have His joy.

III. The Joy of the Lord is so Important the Savior Prayed We would have it.

And now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. John 17:13

Comment: The Lord Jesus knew that no Christian could make a success out of life without His joy. To know and do the will of God -- with joy -- is an unbeatable combination.

IV. The Joy of the Lord is a Characteristic of a True Christian.

For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Rom. 14:17

Comment: Christianity starts on the inside and works out. Every believer has the joy of the Lord at first -- but most of us lose it!

V. The Joy of the Lord is that which finds its Source in God and His Grace.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Comment: It is encouraging to see that God seeks to fill us with His joy. The Holy Spirit has come to make that a reality. Our part is "believing" -- not a mystical feeling -- but the obedience in faith.

VI. The Joy of the Lord is Described as the Fruit of the Spirit.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (self-control), against such there is no law. Gal. 5:22,23

Comment: These nine virtues are evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit. The first three describe our growing experience with God. The second triad our relationship with people. The last three indicate the kind of character God is developing within us. How can we say we are filled with the Spirit -- if we do not have His joy?

VII. The Joy of the Lord is to Accompany Our Trust in Times of Trial.

Whom having not seen, you love, in whom, though now you see him not, yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.
I Peter 1:8

Comment: Peter is here speaking of the trials of our faith (V7). He states that when we understand trials, and how to believe God, we can go through the experience with joy -- not bitterness -- but joy.

VIII. The Joy of the Lord Accompanies a Knowledge and Practice of the Bible.

And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full.
I John 1:4

Comment: God has revealed Himself to us and given us the Bible so we can learn to walk in fellowship with him -- and have His joy.

Conclusion: What are to do if we do not have the joy of the Lord?

- A. Make sure you have cleaned up your past and have truly surrendered to God.
- B. Reject what you have in the place of the joy of the Lord.
- C. Believe the truth that God gave you His joy in the new birth.
- D. Practice the joy of the Lord by faith -- even though you do not feel joyful. This is NOT pretending -- but practicing truth -- as we do with the assurance of our salvation.

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