

The Joy and Power of Experiencing God
Nehemiah 8:1-12

Introduction

- A. What would you say of a person for whom God chose to die and in that death paid his every spiritual debt – one who is loved by God, accepted, forgiven, assured of Heaven, and promised God's continual presence, blessing, and protection?
1. We would say that person would be the most thankful and happiest person alive. We would take for granted he or she would live in constant enjoyment of God Himself.
 2. Every Christian has such a legal relationship with God. The tragedy is that, for most of us, it is only a legal relationship. It is His express will that we enjoy Him.
- B. This joy is not the contentment that comes when things are going well. It is enjoying God Himself -- as we experience His presence, love, peace, and power in daily fellowship.

I. The Joy of the Lord is a Source and Evidence of Strength.

This day is sacred to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the Joy of the LORD is your strength... [They] celebrate[d] with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them. Nehemiah 8:10-12

Comment: The books Ezra and Nehemiah record the return of the Jews from Babylon. They returned to a ruined temple, city, and serious opposition from those living there. Under Nehemiah's leadership the Jews repented as the Word was read and covenanted to obey God. Because of this response Nehemiah instructed them not to grieve but to be joyful and to celebrate. He said their joy would be a source of spiritual strength.

The person, family or Church, that does not have a relationship with God that produces joy, is a person, family or Church that is characterized by spiritual weakness. Such weakness is seen in a lack of freedom in love and worship, a lack of conviction and repentance, and a lack of strength to obey God and enjoy Him. Such a condition may be due to lack of instruction and healing prayer – or it may be due to a long process into formalism, legalism and a life of external obedience – doing everything right – but with very little internal -- or any -- experience of God's presence and blessing. This is exactly where too many of us are today!

We must recognize that our lack of enjoying God means we are not living in God's will. We must repent, surrender to God, and determine to seek God and His will until we know the daily experience of enjoying God! We may need some encouragement and healing prayer.

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

I have told you this (Vine-Branch) so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. John 15:11

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

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. John 16:24

IV. The Joy of the Lord is so Important our Savior Prayed we would have it.

"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them." John 17:13

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

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Rom 14:17

VI. The Joy of the Lord finds its Source in God and His Grace.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13

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

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Gal. 5:22,23

VIII. The Joy of the Lord is to Accompany our Trust in Times of Trial.

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy. I Peter 1:8

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

1. Make sure you have cleaned up your past and are surrendered to God.
2. Reject and stop practicing what you have in the place of joy.
3. Accept the truth you have the joy of the Lord legally – because you are a believer.
4. Practice the joy of the Lord by faith. This is not pretending but practicing the truth – as you did regarding the assurance of salvation.
5. Seek encouraging instruction and healing prayer. **Refuse to live out of God's will!**

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