

The Joy of the Lord

“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.**”

Nehemiah 8:10

Introduction:

1. Tonight the whole church will have a feast of mirth to praise and worship God as in the text above.
2. For the Bible basis for such an event, see ... <http://www.letgodbetrue.com/sermons/pdf/cause-for-mirth.pdf>.
3. David did not content himself with the duties of religion – he went far beyond them (think temple!).
4. Freewill offerings are above and beyond duty, and we must have N.T. feasts of charity (Jude 1:12).
5. The O.T. provides details for N.T. commandments, and we should celebrate more than the O.T.
6. Josiah and others wept sorely when hearing the word of God, but not in Nehemiah’s day or today.
7. There is a time to mourn, and there is a time to dance, and it was and is a time for the latter! Glory!
8. The God of mercy and hope and all comfort is also the God of joy, for His joy and our joy in Him.
9. It is nearly unbelievable our great God and Father delights in and accepts such events as worship!
10. A church full of the Holy Spirit in gospel purity takes pleasure in eating in joy and peace (Ac 2:46).
11. This joy of the Lord can be holiness to the Lord and the strength of soul and purpose to please God.
12. Divide it by God’s own joy, joy in God, His command, enablement, conviction, assistance, promise.

THE LORD’S OWN JOY IN HIMSELF

- A. By the definition of His own independent and perfect nature, the LORD Jehovah, our God, is infinitely happy (Ps 115:3; 135:6; Isaiah 46:10; Rev 4:11; Pr 16:4; Ps 76:10).
 1. His name, I AM THAT I AM, says it all; He exists and acts for His own pleasure.
 2. We cannot add to Him or take from Him (Job 35:5-8; Psalm 50:7-13; Mic 6:6-7).
 3. God is happy loving His people, though hard to believe (Isaiah 62:5; Zeph 3:17).
- B. God’s heaven is a place without any more tears, crying, sorrow, or pain (Rev 21:4).
- C. Jesus of Nazareth had gladness and joy in God while on earth (Ps 16:8-9; Luk 10:21).
 1. He delighted to do God’s will, for it is perfect happiness (Ps 40:6-10; Heb 10:5-9).
 2. He was glad whenever He could magnify God by His great works (John 11:15).
 3. Regardless of the devil’s recorded and unrecorded temptations, He chose His God.
- D. Jesus of Nazareth saw heaven’s joy as sufficient reward for the cross (Ps 16:10-11).
- E. This holy example of His joy should guide and preserve our own souls (Heb 12:1-4).
 1. You will never, not in your worst time, experience the horror He did for your sins.
 2. Hebrews 11 gave a great stadium of witnesses, but look to the example of Jesus.
- F. *How can you regain or increase this joy in the Lord? Confess your sin, and be happy!*
 1. *This comes by reading, meditating, and musing on the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.*
 2. *His relationship with God, purpose in life, and hope of glory should instruct you.*

OUR JOY IN KNOWING AND WALKING WITH THE LORD

- A. Those people whose God is the LORD Jehovah are a happy people (Psalm 144:15; Deut 33:29; Psalm 33:12; 65:4; 89:15; 146:5).
- B. Here is where the opening text above fits, as knowing God and His word produce joy.
 - 1. Active joy in God provides more strength of soul and life than sorrow (Neh 8:10).
 - 2. The source of joy was God's preparation of hearts and understanding His word.
 - 3. When God visits with His presence or blessings, we should unashamedly rejoice.
 - 4. Daniel fasted when captive in Babylon, but here is the greatest preaching service!
 - 5. The soul can be made better by sorrow, but joy in God gives strength for service.
- C. David concluded that God was His exceeding joy, even though he had more opportunity for other pleasures than you could ever try (Psalm 43:4-5; 21:1-6; 71:23).
 - 1. David was glad to go to the Lord's house to worship (Ps 122:1; 42:4; 84:1,10-12).
 - 2. God's word provided for great rejoicing in his heart (Ps 119:111; 19:8; Jer 15:16).
 - 3. David joyed so much to dance and give like no other (II Sa 6:14-15; I Chr 22:14).
- D. David delighted and Jeremiah gloried, both in the Lord Himself (Ps 37:4; Jer 9:23-24).
- E. The joy of thankfulness for salvation is a constant (II Thes 2:13; Is 61:10; II Co 9:15).
- F. Habakkuk compares the basis of worldly and divine joy (Hab 3:17-19). Love this text!
- G. *How can you regain or increase this joy in the Lord? Confess your sin, and be happy!*
 - 1. *Eliphaz instructed Job to acquaint himself with God for good blessing (Job 22:21).*
 - 2. *David went to the sanctuary and remembered and meditated on God (Ps 63:1-6).*
 - 3. *Asaph also went to the sanctuary and corrected his perspective (Ps 73:17,25-26).*
 - 4. *We must take the time and remove the impediments to calm meditation (Ps 46:10).*
 - 5. *We can benefit by being around other spiritually minded worshippers (Ps 34:1-2).*

OUR JOY COMMANDED IN THE LORD'S KINGDOM

- A. Happiness, gladness, and joy are not options in Christ's kingdom. Get happy! Rejoice!
- B. Kings generally did not allow unhappy servants around (Nehemiah 2:1-2; Esther 4:2).
 - 1. Parents can easily grasp this rule, as morose children are destructive to the family.
 - 2. Masters and spouses also see it as evidence of disrespect and disaffection to them.
- C. Our King has commanded joy in His service, which is truly a most reasonable request.
 - 1. Paul commanded Philippians to rejoice, in perpetuity and by repetition (Phil 4:4).
 - 2. When you find this clearly stated command, do not miss the earlier one (Phil 3:1).
- D. Moses, under an austere covenant, commanded gladness (Deut 28:47-48; 14:22-27).
- E. David's Psalms are filled with duties and examples of rejoicing in the Lord (Ps 2:11; 5:11; 21:1; 32:11; 33:1; 40:16; 48:11; 58:10; 63:11; 68:3-4; 70:4; 85:6; 89:15-16; 90:14; 97:1,12; 98:4; 105:3; 118:24; 119:162; 149:2; etc., etc.).
- F. Blessed by God's Spirit as elsewhere, they are also duties (Ro 14:17-19; Gal 5:22-23).
- G. Happiness and joy are a daily choice – they are truly not the results of circumstances.
 - 1. Jesus taught for those persecuted to rejoice and be exceeding glad (Matt 5:10-12).
 - 2. James taught for those in divers temptations to count the event all joy (Jas 1:2-4).
 - 3. It is easy to find the apostles putting these commands to action (Acts 5:41; 16:25).

4. You can choose a life of affliction or a continual feast of joy (Pr 15:15,13; 17:22).
- H. *How can you regain or increase this joy in the Lord? Confess your sin, and be happy!*
1. *Obviously here, since it is a command, there needs to be clear and full confession.*
 2. *Contemplation on the One making the command and the command itself will help.*
 3. *The strongest man is the man that can rule his spirit and make this choice for joy.*

OUR JOY PROVIDED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD

- A. God gives joy and peace and hope in believing by Holy Ghost power (Romans 15:13), for He is the God of hope, mercy, and all comfort, and He is also the God of great joy.
- B. David confessed that God had put gladness in him above worldly success (Psalm 4:7).
- C. Solomon admitted true enjoyment of life's blessings was a gift of God (Eccl 5:18-20).
- D. God's kingdom rightly understood and enjoyed has Holy Spirit joy (Rom 14:17-19).
- E. As the flesh leads to sins, the Spirit leads to godly fruit, including joy (Gal 5:19-25).
- F. *How can you regain or increase this joy in the Lord? Confess your sin, and be happy!*
 1. *Sins and worldly inputs grieve and quench the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30; I Thes 5:19).*
 2. *Spiritual inputs and feeding on Jesus Christ and His word will bring joy in power.*
 3. *How much are you like Joshua in the tabernacle or the two going to Emmaus?*

OUR JOY CAUSED BY GOD'S CREATION AND PROVIDENCE

- A. Heaven's angels were filled with happiness at God's glorious creation (Job 38:7), which indicates that we lesser beings should also delight in it (Job 39:13; Psalm 8:3)!
- B. God sends bountiful food for gladness as His witness of goodness (Acts 14:16-17).
- C. In light of death, God commends a joyful approach to life's blessings (Eccl 9:7-10).
 1. Here is mentioned bread, wine, white garments, ointment, wives, and work. Get it!
 2. We can add sunshine, wonders, seasons, taste, sleep, friends, children, success, wisdom, 600-count sheets, travel, the zoo, the oceans, deliverances, answers, etc.
- D. Solomon taught repeated in his book of philosophy that God delights in our pleasure.
 1. Heathen gods demanded your sons in sacrifice, but our God gave His only Son!
 2. Heathen gods took your meat and drink offerings, but our God lets us have them!
- E. Rejecting any idea of socialism, the rich are to enjoy God's richness (I Tim 6:17-19).
- F. *How can you regain or increase this joy in the Lord? Confess your sin, and be happy!*
 1. *We plan, prepare, and participate in feasts, just as He commanded us to fear Him.*
 2. *You must slow life enough to taste and see that the Lord is good in many ways.*

OUR JOY BY OBEYING THE LORD'S COMMANDS

- A. God's commands are not grievous: they are the way to true happiness (I John 5:3).
 1. Consider any commandments, from quarantining leprosy to corporal child training, from dowries to waste removal, from marital duties to a work ethic, etc., etc.
 2. This was so true that Moses said Israel's law would be highly regarded (Deut 4:6).

3. Solomon's inspired advice greatly exalted the effect of wisdom (Prov 3:13,18).
4. David / Peter tell how to love life and see good days (Ps 34:12-14; I Pet 3:10-12).
- B. The yoke of Christ is easy and His burden light compared to others (Matt 11:28-30).
- C. True joy results from getting outside yourself to love God and others (Matt 22:37-40), which is remembered by using JOY as an acronym – Jesus, others, and then you.
 1. It is more blessed to give than receive – learn it and prove it (Ac 20:35; Pr 14:21).
 2. Whitney Houston died as a fool this week, especially in light of the song she popularized, “The Greatest Love of All,” which is a profane adoration of self-love!
- D. *How can you regain or increase this joy in the Lord? Confess your sin, and be happy!*
 1. *As David and Peter wrote, you cannot realize the benefit without obeying the Lord.*
 2. *Measure all world events by God's commandments and see their folly and pain.*
 3. *Each of His commandments has divine wisdom: see it; if blind, believe it anyway.*

OUR JOY WAITING FOR US IN HEAVEN WITH THE LORD

- A. This is the joy that Jesus saw before Him, if He would endure the cross (Heb 12:2).
- B. Considering the future things of glory should produce joy unspeakable (I Peter 1:8).
- C. Saints suffer for Christ here, but they will rejoice with Him there (I Pet 4:13), for persecution is two tokens – of destruction and salvation (Phil 1:28-29; II Thess 1:5-6).
- D. Jesus Christ will present us faultless before God: we will be very happy (Jude 1:24).
- E. *How can you regain or increase this joy in the Lord? Confess your sin, and be happy!*
 1. *We read, meditate, and comfort one another with the future (I Thess 4:18; 5:11).*
 2. *We set our affection above, for we know our lives are hid with Christ (Col 3:1-4).*

Conclusion:

1. There is false joy, which should hardly be considered here, for it cannot work or last to satisfy any.
 - a. It is the joy of the hypocrite, which is so short, because God will not allow hypocrites to succeed.
 - b. It is the joy of sin for a season, always a very short season, and comes back to bite many ways.
 - c. It is the joy of earthly things only, which the man trying the most called vain and vexing of spirit.
2. Happiness and joy are choices that you make every day – they are truly not results of circumstances.
 - a. Consider that Jesus taught for those persecuted to rejoice and be exceeding glad (Matt 5:10-12).
 - b. Consider that James taught for those in divers temptations to count the event all joy (Jas 1:2-4).
3. The Lord delivered His people and us from worse than Babylon, and in light of His favor, we should continue asking grace and go forth with precious seed expecting an eventual harvest (Ps 126:1-6).

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, “A Cause for Mirth,” ... <http://www.letgodbetru.com/sermons/pdf/cause-for-mirth.pdf>.
2. The sermon outline, “A Preaching Service,” ... <http://www.letgodbetru.com/sermons/pdf/preaching-service.pdf>.
3. The sermon outline, “Fat and Happy,” ... <http://www.letgodbetru.com/sermons/pdf/fat-and-happy.pdf>.
4. The sermon outline, “Loving Life,” ... <http://www.letgodbetru.com/sermons/pdf/loving-life-and-seeing-good-days.pdf>.
5. The sermon outline, “Praying for Soul Revival,” ... <http://www.letgodbetru.com/sermons/pdf/praying-for-soul-revival.pdf>.
6. The sermon outline, “I Thess 5:16; Rejoice Evermore,” ... http://www.letgodbetru.com/sermons/pdf/5_16.pdf.
7. The sermon outline, “The Heart of David,” ... <http://www.letgodbetru.com/sermons/pdf/heart-of-david.pdf>.

8. The sermon outline, "Exceeding Magnifical," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/exceeding-magnifical.pdf>.
9. The sermon outline, "He Deserves Better," ... <http://www.letgodbettrue.com/sermons/pdf/he-deserves-better-than-that.pdf>.
10. The Proverb commentary, "Proverbs 15:15," ... http://www.letgodbettrue.com/proverbs/15_15.htm.
11. The sermon outline, "Ecclesiastes," ... not in e-format at this time.
12. The sermon outline, "The Goodness of God," ... not in e-format at this time.
13. The sermon outline, "The Gladness of Saints," ... not in e-format at this time.
14. The sermon outline, "Real Happiness," ... not in e-format at this time.
15. The sermon outline, "Joy Unspeakable," ... not in e-format at this time.