

The Oil of Gladness

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon teaches that the 'oil of gladness' symbolizes the Holy Spirit's joyful anointing upon Christ and believers, empowering them with divine joy amid trials.

Scripture: Psalm 45:7, Isaiah 61:1, Acts 10:38, Acts 13:52, John 4:34, Hebrews 7:26, Luke 10:21, Isaiah 11:2-3

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Joy"

Description

In 'The Oil of Gladness,' C.H. Spurgeon explores the profound joy that the Holy Spirit imparts to Christ and His followers. He reveals how the Spirit's anointing empowered Jesus throughout His ministry and how believers can share in this divine gladness. Spurgeon emphasizes the cooperation of the Trinity in redemption and encourages Christians to serve the Lord with joyful hearts. This devotional sermon offers rich insight into the sustaining power of joy amidst trials.

Transcript

"Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Psalm 45:7

WE KNOW THAT THE ANOINTING received by our Lord Jesus Christ was the resting of the Spirit of God upon him without measure. We are not left to any guesswork about this, for in Isaiah 61 we are told, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me." Our Lord appropriated these very words to himself when he went into the synagogue at Nazareth and opened the book at the place wherein these words are written, and said, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." The Apostle Peter also, in Acts 10:38, speaks of "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power": so that we know both on Old and New Testament authority that the anointing which rested upon the Lord Jesus Christ was the unction of the Holy Ghost. Therefore, by the "oil of gladness" which we have before us in the text is intended the Holy Spirit himself, or one of the gracious results of his sacred presence. The divine Spirit has many attributes, and his benign influences operate in divers ways, bestowing upon us benefits of various kinds, too numerous for us to attempt to catalogue them. Amongst these is his comforting and cheering influence. "The fruit of the Spirit is joy." In Acts 13:52 we read, "The disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." Wherever he comes as an anointing, whether upon the Lord or upon his people, upon the Christ or the Christians, upon the Anointed or upon those whom he anoints, in every case the ultimate result is joy and peace. On the head of our great High Priest he is joy, and this oil of gladness flows down to the skirts of his garments. To the Comforter, therefore, we ascribe "the oil of

gladness."

From this great truth we learn another, namely, the perfect co-operation of the three persons of the blessed Trinity in the work of our redemption. The Father sends the Son, the Son with alacrity comes to redeem us, and the Spirit of God is upon him; so that Father, Son, and Spirit have each a part in the saving work, and the one God of heaven and earth is the God of salvation. A very interesting subject is the work of the Spirit upon the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. We see the Holy Ghost mysteriously operating in the formation and birth of the holy child Jesus, for by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost was he born of a woman. This work of the Holy Spirit was manifested to all believing eyes when the Lord Jesus came out of the waters of the Jordan after his baptism, and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove and rested upon him. Before he was said to "wax strong in spirit," but afterwards he is described as "full of the Holy Ghost." Then was he led of the Spirit and inspired by his divine energy, and this was shown throughout the whole of his life, for the Spirit was with him in innumerable miracles and in the demonstration and power which followed his words, so that he spoke as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. In him was abundantly fulfilled the prophecy which saith, "And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth." The Holy Spirit had also a peculiar interest in his resurrection, for he was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead." He was "put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." That same Spirit wrought even more fully when the Lord ascended up on high, and led captivity captive; then, succeeding his ascension, the gifts of the cloven tongues of fire and the rushing mighty wind were witnessed by his disciples, for the Spirit of God was given abundantly to the church in connection with the ascension of the Redeemer. Oh, how sweetly doth the Spirit co-operate with Christ at this very day, for it is he that takes of the things of Christ and reveals them unto us. He is the abiding witness in the church to the truth of the gospel, and the worker of all our gifts and graces. Jesus gives repentance, but the Spirit works it; faith fixes upon Christ, but the Spirit of God first creates faith and opens the eye which looks to Jesus. The whole of this dispensation through it is the peculiar office of the Spirit of God to be revealing Christ to his people, and Christ in his people, and Christ in the midst of an ungodly and gainsaying generation, for a testimony against them. Blessed be the name of the Holy Spirit, that he is the divine anointing, and so proves his hearty assent to the great plan of redemption.

We now come, however, more closely to the text. The Spirit of God is here considered in one of his influences or operations as "the oil of gladness": we shall speak of this in the following way. First, the saviour's anointing with gladness; secondly, the reason for the bestowal of this oil of joy upon him; and, thirdly, the manner of the operation of this sacred anointing upon ourselves.

I. Let us carefully consider THE SAVIOR'S ANOINTING WITH GLADNESS. We are, perhaps, surprised to read of our Lord in connection with gladness. Truly he was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet this sorrowful aspect was that which he presented to the superficial outside observer; and those who look within the veil of his flesh know well that a mystic glory shone within his soul. Did not David say of him as the King of Israel ■ "His glory is great in thy salvation: honor and majesty hast thou laid upon him. For thou hast made him most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad with thy countenance." I fully believe that there was never on the face of the earth a man who knew so profound and true a gladness as our blessed Lord. Did he not desire that his joy might be in his people that their joy might be

full? Does not benevolence beget joy, and who so kind as he? Is it not a great joy to suffer self-sacrifice for beloved ones? And who so disinterested as he? Is there not sure to be happiness in the heart where the noblest motives are paramount and the sweetest graces bear sway? And was not this pre-eminently the case with our Lord? Let us see.

The gladness of our Lord Jesus may be viewed, first, as the gladness which he had IN his work. The Son of God delighted in the work which his Father had given him to do. This delight he declared as God, in the old eternity! "Lo I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God." This delight he had shown as man even before his great public anointing, for when he was yet a child he said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Evidently, even while yet a youth, he anticipated with delight the great business which he had to do for his Father, and commencing in a measure to do it amongst the doctors in the temple at Jerusalem. But the day came in which he had reached the appointed age, and he at once went forth to John to be baptized by him in Jordan, being eager to fulfill all righteousness. Then the Spirit of God came down upon him, and he was openly and visibly anointed, and you see from the moment when he began to stand before the public eye, with what alacrity he pursued his life work. We find him fasting, but he has been speaking to a woman by the well's brink, and the joy which he has felt while blessing her has made him quite forget the necessity for food, and he tells his disciples "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." He felt great gladness in that woman's joy, as she believed in him, and in the expectation of yet more numerous converts from those who were flocking from Samaria, of whom he said "Lift up now your eyes, for behold the fields are white already unto the harvest." That joy in his work made him abhor all idea of turning from its awful consummation, and led him to say to Peter's suggestion "Get thee behind me, Satan." We see it also in such expressions as this, "I have a baptism to be baptised with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." We read that when the time came that he should be received up, he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem. His frequent allusions to his own decease by a shameful death, all showed that he viewed with intense satisfaction the great object after which he was reaching. Once, indeed, his joy flowed over so that others could see it, when he said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." "At that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit." Let it never be forgotten that we must not expect see in the life of Christ great ebullitions of manifest exultation, because he was sent on purpose to bear our sicknesses, and to be "stricken of God and afflicted." His deep joy was concealed by his many griefs, even as the inner glory of the tabernacle of old was hidden beneath coverings of badgers' skins. He was the sun under a cloud, but he was the sun still. If you have a small burden to carry, you may have an excess of strength which you can display in leaping or running, but if you have an enormous load to sustain your steady bearing of it may be an equally sure proof of your strength: so also, if your trials are light, your joyous spirits may vent themselves in smiles and songs, but if you are severely afflicted it will need all your joyfulness to keep you from sinking. Our blessed Lord had a load upon him infinitely transcending any weight of sorrow ever borne by the most burdened of his people, and it needed the wonderful joy which I feel sure we are justified in ascribing to him to balance the marvellous grief which he had to endure. The uplifting influence of this joy sufficed to bring him into a condition of calm, quiet, serene majesty of spirit. Nothing strikes you more in the Savior than the quiet peacefulness with which he pursues the even tenor of his way. Now, if he had not possessed great stores of secret joy his spirit would have been famished for want of sustenance. You would have found him constantly sighing and weeping; his words and tones would have become a terror to those around him, and his whole appearance would have appeared melancholy and depressing to the last degree, whereas his manner was cheerful and attractive■ let the little children who thronged around him bear witness to that. He was a man of sorrows, but he was not a preacher of sorrows, neither do his life or his discourses

leave an unhappy impression upon the mind. The fact, probably, is, that he was both the greatest rejoicer and the greatest mourner that ever lived, and between these two there was an equilibrium of mind kept up, so that wherever you meet him, with the exception of his agony in the garden, he is peaceful and serene. You neither see him dancing like David before the ark, nor yet like David bewailing the loss of one he loved with a "Would God I had died for thee." He does not, like Elijah, run before the king's chariot, nor lie down under the juniper to die. He neither strives nor cries, nor causes his voice to be heard in the streets; his peace is like a river, and his heart abides in the Sabbath of God.

We see, then, that in his work our great High Priest was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, but we also note that those who are his fellows do in their degree partake in this oil of gladness, and are enabled to feel joy in the work which is appointed them of the Lord. While our King is anointed with the oil of gladness it is also written of the virgin souls who wait upon his church, "With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought, they shall enter into the King's palace." If any professing Christian man here is engaged in a work which he does not feel glad to do, I question if he is in his right place. Occasional fits of depression there may be, but these are not because we do not love the work, but because we cannot do it so well as we would desire. We are tired in the work, but not tired of it. The Lord loves to employ willing workmen. His army is not made up of pressed men, but of those whom grace has made volunteers. "Serve the Lord with gladness." Our Lord does not set us task work, and treat us like prisoners in gaol, or slaves under the lash. I sometimes hear our life-work called a task. Well, the expression may be tolerated, but I confess I do not like it to be applied to Christian men. It is no task to me at any rate to preach my Master's gospel, or to serve him in any way. I thank God every day that "to me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." You teachers in the school, I hope your labor of love is not a bondage to you! An unwilling teacher will soon make unwilling scholars. Yea, I know that those of you who serve the Lord find a reward in the work itself, and gladly pursue it. I am sure you will not prosper in it if it be not so. If you follow your work unwillingly, and regret that you ever undertook it, and feel encumbered by it, you will do no good. No man wins a race who has no heart in the running. In this respect the joy of the Lord is your strength, and as your Master was anointed with the oil of gladness in his work, so must you be. Yet, beloved fellow laborer, you will never be so glad in your work as he was in his, nor will you ever be able to prove that gladness by such self-denials, by such agonies, and such a death. He has proved how glad he was to save sinners, because "for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame." Blessed Emanuel, thou art justly anointed with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

We further note that our Lord had this oil of gladness FROM his work. Even while he was engaged in it he derived some joy from it, though it was but as the gleanings of the vintage compared with the after results. He did reap in joy as well as sow in tears, for many became his disciples, and over each one of these he rejoiced. It was impossible that the Good Shepherd should have saved so many sheep as he did without rejoicing when he threw them on his shoulders to bear them to the fold. Assuredly he rejoiced that he had found the sheep which he had lost. But the fullness of his joy was left till after he had ascended on high, then indeed was he anointed with the oil of gladness, and the voice was heard, "To forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold king Solomon with the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals, and in the day of the gladness of his heart." My brethren, the joy of our Lord Jesus Christ now that he knows his beloved are securely his, and no longer the slaves of sin and heirs of wrath, is too great to be measured. He has redeemed unto himself a people in whom his soul delights. For them the price is fully paid, for them the penalty has been completely endured, for them all chains are broken, and for them the prison house is razed to its foundation: for them hath he bruised the serpent's head, for them hath he

by death destroyed death, and led captive him that had the power of death, even the devil.

"All his work and warfare done, He into his heaven is gone, And before his Father's throne Now is pleading for his own."

He now continues to receive into his joy the multitudes whom the Spirit brings to him, for whom of old he shed his precious blood. You cannot conceive the gladness of Christ. If you have ever brought one soul to Christ you have had a drop of it, but his gladness lies not only in receiving them, but in actually being the author of salvation to every one of them. The Savior looks upon the redeemed with an unspeakable delight, thinks of what they used to be, thinks of what they would have been but for his interposition, thinks of what they now are, think of what he means to make them in that great day when they shall rise from the dead; and as his heart is full of love to them he joys in their joy, and exults in their exultation. Their heavens swell their Mediator's heaven, and their myriad embodiments of bliss, each one reflects his own felicity, and so (speaking after the manner of men) increases it, for he lives ten thousand lives by living in them, and joys unnumbered joys in their joys. I speak with humblest fear lest in any word I should speak amiss, for he is God as well as man, but this is certain, that there is a joy of our Lord into which he will give his faithful ones to enter, a joy which he has won by passing through the shame and grief by which he has redeemed mankind. The oil of gladness is abundantly poured on that head which once was crowned with thorns.

Now, brethren, you, also, can be partakers in this joy. When he makes you in your little measure to be instrumentally saviours of others, then you also partake of his gladness, but as I have said before, you cannot know its fullness, for he is in this respect anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me." Returning from the battle and the spoil he has a joy with which none can intermeddle, for his own right hand and his holy arm hath gotten unto him the victory.

Again, our Lord Jesus has the oil of gladness poured upon him in another sense, namely, because his person and his work are the cause of ineffable gladness in others. Oh, I wish I had a week in which to talk upon this point■ a week■ one could scarcely enter upon the theme in that time! We sang just now■

"Jesus, the very thought of thee With sweetness fills my breast."

The oil of gladness upon him is so sweet that we have only to think upon it and it fills us with delight. There is gladness in his very name.

"Exult all hearts with gladness At sound of Jesu's name; What other hath such sweetness, Or such delight can claim?"

What gladness he created when here below. His birth set the skies ringing with heavenly music, and made the hearts of expectant saints to leap for joy. In after days a touch of the hem of his garment made a woman's heart glad when she felt the issue of her blood stanch'd, and a word from his lips made the tongue of the dumb to sing. For him to lay his hand upon the sick was to raise them from their beds of sickness, and deliver them from pain and disease. His touch was gladness then, and a spiritual touch is the same now. To-day to preach of him is gladness, to sing of him is gladness, to trust him is gladness, to work for him is gladness, to have communion with him is gladness. To come to his table, and there to feast

with him, is gladness; to see his image in the eyes of his saints is gladness; to see that image only as yet begun to form in the heart of a young convert is gladness. Everything about him is gladness. All his garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia. Nothing comes within a mile of him but what it makes you glad to think that he has been so near it. The very print of his foot has comfort in it, and the wounds in his hands are windows of hope. I have known some who have had to carry a cross for his dear sake, and they have kissed and hugged that cross, and gloried in their tribulations because they were borne for him. Fellowship with him has turned the bitterest potion into generous wine. Beloved, if these distant glimpses are so precious, what must it be to see him face to face? I have tried to conceive it, and I protest that even in attempting the conception my spirit seems to swoon at the prospect of such supreme delight. Only to hear the music of his footfall on the other side the partition wall raises longings in my heart too strong, too eager to be long endured. What, death, art thou all that divides me from seeing my Lord? I would gladly die a million deaths to see him as he is and to be like him. What, a slumber in the grave for this poor body! Is that all I have to dread? Then let it slumber, and let the worms consume it, for "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Oh, what will it be to see him? To see HIM that loved us so, to mark the wounds with which he purchased our redemption, to behold his glory, to listen to that dear voice of his, and to hear him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant." To lie in his bosom for ever, truly neither eye hath not seen, nor ear heard the like of this bliss. More than the bride longs for the marriage day do we expect the bridal feast of heaven, but of all the dainties on that royal table there will not be one that will be equal to himself, for to see him will be all the heaven we desire. He is better than heaven's harp or angels, and the cause of greater gladness than streets of gold or walls of jasper.

Brethren, can we share this power to distribute joy? Assuredly we can. If the Lord Jesus be with us we can give joy to others. I know some whose very presence comforts their fellows; their words are so full of consolation, and their hearts so overflowing with sympathy that they make gladness wherever they go. Ay, but the best of you, ye sons of consolation, are not anointed with the oil of gladness to the same extent as he was. Above his fellows, even above Barnabas the son of consolation; above the best and the tenderest sympathizers is he thus anointed, and from him there pours forth a continual stream of effectual consolation which becomes the oil of joy to those who wear the garments of heaviness. Thus much upon the first point, the Savior's anointing of gladness.

II. Let us now consider THE REASON FOR THE BESTOWAL OF THIS ANOINTING UPON HIM? It is given in the text. He is anointed above his fellows, because it is said of him, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness." The perfect righteousness of Christ has brought to him this gladness, because perfect holiness there must be before there can be perfect happiness. Sin is the enemy of joy. Let the sinner say what he likes, sin can no more dwell with real joy than the lion will lie down with the lamb. To be perfectly glad you must be perfectly cleansed from sin, for until you are so cleansed you cannot possess the oil of gladness to the measure that Christ possessed it. As the believer is delivered from the power of sin he is brought into a condition in which the joy of the Lord can more and more abide in him. Now, every way Jesus loved righteousness intensely and hated wickedness intensely. He died that he might establish righteousness and that he might destroy wickedness from off the face of the earth; therefore it is that he has greater gladness, because he had greater holiness. Moreover, you know that in any holy enterprise if the business succeeds the joy of the worker is proportionate to the trial it has cost him. In the great battle of righteousness our Lord has led the van, in the great fight against wickedness our Savior has borne the brunt of the battle, therefore, because he to the death loved righteousness and to the agony and bloody sweat strove against sin, the accomplished conquest brings him the greatest joy. He has done the most

for the good cause, and therefore he is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

Now, note there is another reason why he is anointed, and there is another view of the anointing. He is anointed above his fellows, which shows that those who are in fellowship with him are anointed too. You observed in our reading that the high priest had the oil poured on his head, but the sons of Aaron who were minor priests were sprinkled with this same oil mixed with the blood of the sacrifice. On Christ this anointing is poured above his fellows, and then upon his fellows in communion with himself there comes the sprinkling of the oil. We have our measure; he has it without measure. Now, beloved, Christ is anointed above his fellows that his fellows may be anointed with him. Even as he ascended above all things that he might fill all things, so is he anointed above his fellows that he may anoint his fellows; and through the power of the anointing we are told that his people come into the same condition of righteousness as himself. Turn to Isaiah 61., which passage we have already had before us, and you find as follows■ "To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that"■ mark this!■ "that they might be called trees of righteousness". Now, observe, that we first read, "Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness, therefore God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness," and then we meet with the parallel with reference to ourselves, "The oil of joy for mourning, that they may be called trees of righteousness." He is anointed because he is righteous; we are anointed that we may be righteous, and thus in Christ we come into the condition in which it is safe for us to be glad, and possible for joy to dwell in us. To the unrighteous the oil of gladness cannot come, but to the righteous there ariseth light even in darkness. "There is no peace saith my God, unto the wicked." The holy oil was forbidden to be placed upon a stranger to God's holy house; and upon man's flesh it could not be poured, because man's flesh is a corrupt, polluted thing. This oil of gladness comes only on those who are born into God's Israel by regeneration, and are delivered from walking after the flesh; these the Lord makes to be as "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified." See then the two reasons why Christ has received the anointing, first because he is righteous himself; and secondly, that he may make others righteous. Therefore is the Spirit of the Lord God upon him that he may give the oil of joy to his own chosen, and make them righteous, even as he is righteous, glad as he is glad.

III. We will now meditate upon THE MANNER OF THE OPERATION OF THIS OIL OF GLADNESS UPON US. Jesus is anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. Now, we have to show that his fellows are anointed with the oil of gladness too. Did not David say, "Thou anointest mine head with oil; my cup runneth over"? so that we can say of ourselves what we say of our Lord, we are anointed, for he was anointed. Now, in what respects does the anointing of the Holy Spirit give us gladness? I shall notice eight things, and touch but very briefly on each.

First, we too, through Jesus Christ, are anointed to an office, "for he hath made us"■ whisper it to one another in the joy of delight■ "He hath made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign for ever and ever." When the oil went on Aaron's head, you know how it ran down his beard, even Aaron's beard, unto the skirts of his garments, and now this day this anointing oil, which made the king and the priest, has fallen upon us too. Blessed be his name, shall we not be glad? It is very inconsistent with our position if we are not. Are you a king and do you not rejoice?

"Why should the children of our King Go mourning all their days? Sweet Comforter, descend and bring Some unction of thy grace."

May the gladness now come to you. You are priests to God. Shall the anointed priests serve their Lord with gloomy countenances? No: rejoice in the Lord always, all ye priests of his that are anointed to this blessed work. "Bless the Lord, O house of Israel: bless the Lord, O house of Aaron."

We, too, are consecrated to the Lord, for the oil poured upon the priest was the oil of consecration. From that time forward he was a dedicated man; he could not serve anyone but God; he, above all the rest of the congregation, was the man of God for ever as long as ever he lived. So beloved, we have been consecrated: the Spirit of God has sanctified us and set us apart unto the Lord, as it is written, "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price." Our Lord said in his matchless prayer, "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." "Sanctify them," said he, "by thy truth, thy word is truth." Yes, blessed be God, we are consecrated men and women: we belong to the Lord, and are vessels for the Master's use, hallowed from all other uses to be the Lord's. "For I will be to them a God, they shall be to me a people." Does not this make you glad? Are you really set apart to be the Lord's own sons and daughters, and hallowed to be used by him in his service both here and hereafter, and do you not rejoice? O my soul, dost thou not feel the trickling of the consecrating oil adown thy brow even now, and does it not make thy face to shine and make thy heart happy, because thou art now the Lord's?

Thirdly, by this oil we are also qualified for our office. You see the Spirit descended upon Christ that he might have the spirit of wisdom, and power, and so be strengthened and qualified to discharge his sacred work. Now, the Spirit of God is upon every believer in this sense. Remember how in his First Epistle, second chapter, and twentieth verse, John says, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things," or "ye are able to discern all things." And further on, in that same chapter, he says, "This anointing teacheth you all things." Well, if we are to serve the Lord a main gift is knowledge, for how can we instruct the ignorant, or guide the perplexed, except we know ourselves? And it is this anointing which teaches us, and makes us fit for the service to which the Master has called us. Oh, does the Holy Spirit then lead us into all truth, and give us knowledge, and shall we not rejoice? Ignorance means sorrow, but the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ means joy. O brethren, will ye not bless God to-day for what the Spirit of God has taught you? If you do not, what must you be made of? for he has taught you such wonderful lessons so full of joy. Even if he has never taught you more than this, that whereas you were once blind now you see, he has taught you enough to make your heart rejoice as long as you live. Is he not the oil of gladness?

Fourthly, the Spirit of God heals us of our diseases. The Eastern mode of medicine was generally the application of oil, and I should not wonder if in the course of years it should be discovered that the modern pharmacy, with all its drugs, is not worth so much as the old-fashioned method. Certainly, when the Holy Spirit spake concerning sick men, and advised that medicines should be used, and prayer for their restoration, he prescribed anointing with oil. I suppose that anointing with oil was mentioned because it was the current medicine of the times, but it could not have been injurious or altogether absurd, or the Holy Spirit would not in any measure have sanctioned it. I will not raise the question, however. But a frequent medicine of the olden time was, undoubtedly, anointing with oil, and it is well known that olive oil does possess very remarkable healing qualities. I have read in books of one or two instances of the bites of serpents having the venom effectually removed by the use of olive oil. It is more commonly used in countries where it grows than here, and it is in many ways a very useful medicine. Certainly the Holy Spirit is that to us. What wounds and bruises have been healed with this oil. Before the Spirit came they were putrefying, they had not been bound up nor mollified with ointment, but now this ointment, mixed after the art of the apothecary, with the costliest spices, has effectually healed us, and what remains of the old

sores and wounds it continues still to heal; and so wonderful is its power it will ultimately take out every scar, and we shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing through its healing power. Shall we not, therefore, be glad and rejoice in the Lord, for if restoration to health makes us happy surely the renewal of our spiritual youth should make our hearts bound for joy?

Thus also we are supplied and softened. Oil applied to the body supplies and softens, and, believe me, brethren, nothing is more akin to joy than softness and tenderness of heart. If ever you meet with a hard-hearted proud man, he is not a happy man and if he should seem to be happy in his pride it is a dangerous and deadly happiness, and the sooner it is taken away the better. Where God dwells is heaven, and where does he dwell? With the humble and the contrite heart. That is a beautiful expression of David's, I have drunk joy out of it, "Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." Oh, there is never a bone in manhood's system that knows how to rejoice till God has broken it, and when it is broken then comes the mighty Physician and applies the oil and restores the bone to infinitely more than its former strength, and then the bones which had been broken become each one so many new arguments for gratitude, and all our healed wounds become mouths of praise unto the Most High. We are thus softened and gladdened.

By the oil of the Holy Spirit we are also strengthened. Oil well rubbed into the system was anciently assumed to be a great strengthener, and I suppose it was. Certainly the Holy Spirit is the strength of Christians, and where he is the strength there is sure to be joy. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Oil, too, is a beautifier. The Easterns did not think themselves fit for their banquets till they had washed their face and anointed themselves with perfumed oil. They were very fond of locks dripping with oil and faces bright therewith. Certainly there is a beauty which the Spirit gives to men, which they can never obtain in any other way. Oh, the excellence of the character that is formed by the hand of the Spirit of God! It is a beautiful thing which even God himself delights to look upon; it is a thing of beauty, and in the most emphatic sense a joy for ever. He that is made comely with the comeliness which the Holy Spirit gives must be a happy man. Other beauty may bring sorrow, but the beauty of holiness makes us akin to angels.

Once more, it becomes a perfume. When oil was poured on a man his presence scented the air around him, and when the Spirit of God is given to us it is perceived by other spiritual minds. Cannot you detect in a brother's prayer that he has been with Jesus? Do you not know by the lives of some of Christ's dear saints that he is very familiar with them? Do you not perceive that they have had a special anointing? The ungodly world cannot tell it, but saints discern it. The nostril of the wicked is only pleased by the leeks, and the garlic, and the onions of Egypt, but the believing nostril has been sanctified, and it perceives the delicate myrrh and cinnamon, and sweet calamus and cassia, which make up the anointing oil. The rare combination of sacred qualities which make up a holy character will be seen in the believer in whom the Holy Spirit displays his power, and as a consequence he will be glad at heart.

Furthermore, I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now, for the time is spent. Therefore I will only say, I pray, brethren, that the anointing may be ours in all the various senses I have mentioned. I should like all of you to go away happy. You children of God, be as glad as ever you can be. I would to God that a sacred gladness rang through this house like a marriage peal: yet for all that, do not forget that Jesus has joy above you all. You may be very glad, but he is gladder still. You may sing his praises, but he leads the sacred orchestra of heaven. "In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee," saith he. Rejoice in his joy. I have often thought it did not matter any more what became of me so long as

he is victorious. A soldier in battle, sorely wounded, lies bleeding in a ditch, but he hears the sound of the trumpets, and they tell him the commander is coming along, the King for whom his loyal heart is willing to bleed, and he enquires, "Have they won the day?" "Oh, yes," they say "he has won the day, and the enemy are flying before him." The soldier exclaims, "Thank God, I can die." It is the soldier's joy to die with victory ringing in his ears. Our Lord is glad, and therefore we are glad.

"Let him be crowned with majesty Who bowed his head to death, And be his honor sounded high By all things that have breath."

If it be so we will be content to say, like David, "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended." We have no more to pray for: we have done with the world, done with wishing, done with everything, if Christ reigns, and all things are under his foot. May this joy be yours. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON■ Exodus 30:22-33; 29:5-7, 21; Psalm 45:1-8; Isaiah 61:1-3.

The reader is earnestly requested to read these passages.

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"■ Psalm 45 (Vers. 1.), 438, 786.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ch-spurgeon/the-oil-of-gladness/>

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