

The Joy of the Lord

by Eli Brayley

Eli Brayley's sermon emphasizes that true joy is rooted in the Lord and often arises from pain and spiritual depth, contrasting it with mere silliness.

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 30:5, Psalm 30:11, John 16:21, Acts 2:28, 2 Corinthians 4:8, Galatians 5:22

Topics: "Joy Of Lord", "Spiritual Strength"

Description

Eli Brayley preaches about the true essence of joy, emphasizing that joy is not found in silliness or worldly entertainment but in the Lord's presence and strength. He challenges Christians to embrace the pattern in Scripture where joy is birthed from pain and suffering, leading to a deeper understanding and experience of true joy. Brayley highlights that joy is a fruit of the Spirit, sown in tears and reaped in victory, giving believers the strength to overcome obstacles and walk through the darkest valleys.

Transcript

I know many silly Christians.

I know very few joyful Christians.

I know many silly unbelievers.

I know very few joyful Christians.

What is joy and where does it come from?

"Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance." - Acts 2:28

There is no shortage of talking of joy in the Church today, but no greater lack of the real substance of true joy. This joy... this true joy that wrought forward our Savior's resolve, "who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Can we honestly say we possess this joy? Does this joy cause us to despise shame, to take up our cross and follow Jesus? I suggest it does not. We do not have this joy, that is why it is so difficult for us to die to ourselves... we take more delight in the flesh than in the spiritual promises that follow. What presumption!

We must first understand the nature of joy. "...the joy of the Lord is my strength." We have heard that. Are you living that? Understand this:

This is the joy of the Lord: The Lord's joy. The joy of the Lord is the Lord's joy! It sounds so simple... have we missed this? For so long we have consented to the idea that an abundance of silliness is the joy of the Lord. If a person is smiling and laughing and funny, we say: "Wow! That person is so full of joy!" Quite the contrary. Silliness is almost always a result of joy deficiency, used to replace the precious joy in which we so desperately lack. If we truly had the joy of the Lord we would have no need to be silly. We would be satisfied in the Lord, not needing to be 'entertained' by such trivial worldliness. Honestly, are unbelievers joyful then? They do a much better job of being silly than do Christians! Be not conformed, but be transformed!

Here is an unmistakable pattern in life and Scripture: Joy is birthed from pain. A person does not obtain joy from nothing. A mother receives joy when she gives birth to a child through much labor and pain (John 16:21). Jesus was looking forward towards the joy that awaited beyond the cross, and He told His disciples they would weep for a little while but would later rejoice. Psalm 30:5 says, "...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." It is in the dark times of our lives, when we weep, when we feel overwhelmed, when hope is dim... it is in these times that great victory arises and we then are flooded with joy set before us!

"Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness." - Psalm 30:11-12

Tell me, you Christian who excels in foolishness; do you weep? Do you groan in the Spirit? Are you a man of sorrows? Do you mourn with those who mourn? Have you ever been to lonely Gethsemane? Have you ever lived in the wilderness? Have you ever worn sackcloth or adorned your head with dust? Have you ever beat your breast or tasted the bitter tears of repentance? No? Then you do not know joy. Oh, woe to the comfortable, for they have received their comfort in full... those who laugh now, they will mourn and weep (Luke 6:25). Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

It is joy unspeakable! Unspeakable! How could I express such joy with earthen language? How could I express such joy?! Oh, let those who understand rejoice and be glad!

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). Fullness of joy comes from the presence of the Lord (Psalm 16:11). It is not something manufactured. It does not arise from a joke or a happy tale. Joy is sown in tears. Joy is reaped in victory! "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Joy is what makes you rise up and shout "Hallelujah!" in the midst of all trouble! Joy is what makes you walk through the darkest valleys. Joy is what gives you the strength to overcome all obstacles. Joy is what says "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed!" Oh, this joy is the Lord's joy! Our silliness will never give us this strength.

This joy is full of glory! It is our hope of heaven, set before us, the glory of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, exalted to the highest place, and lover of our souls!

Johann Sebastian Bach wrote it well: "Jesu, joy of man's desiring!"

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