

Fulness of Joy

Scriptures:

John 16:16-31

Hebrews 12:1-2

Nehemiah 8:10

Numbers 6:24-26



Annie

Joy – it's not a word you hear much in conversation these days. People say they are happy, or great, or having fun when their lives are going along quite nicely. But hardly anyone says they are joyful. It is almost as if it's too old fashioned or, perhaps, even embarrassing to admit this. Our first thought is often "what would people think if I say I am joyful when we live in such a broken world?" Yet, Jesus was unequivocal when He said to all who follow Him "your JOY no-one takes from you".

In the book of Hebrews, the writer tells us that it was for the joy that was set before Him that Jesus went to the cross and suffered all He did. It fills my heart with inexpressible gratitude and sense of wonder when I ponder that we are the joy that Jesus could see, we are the joy that He endured all of that cruelty for. But what did He see through the blood and sweat and torture? Did He see our sin? Did He see our depravity? Or was it the finished, complete, perfect work of God in us that He saw?

I truly believe that what gave Jesus the strength to go through all He did was indeed the JOY of the Lord. And, if that is so, surely, this is what He saw in us as He hung on the cross at Calvary, and this is what gives all the Glory right back to God to Whom it belongs.

In our Father God, there are no degrees of love. We are loved by Him with the same intensity and ferocity that He loves His Son, not one jot less. The limitless Love of God is just as much our inheritance as His children, as it is Christ's. When we turn and run into the Arms of the One who has been pursuing us all our lives and surrender fully to our Father God, He fills us to overflowing with that Love in the Person of Holy Spirit. And, within that Love is the overwhelming joy that we are forever His, forever held in His Hands, forever alive in Him. Again, this always brings Glory to Him and Him alone, for this is Who He is, all the Glory is always and ever for our good.

The enemy would have us believe that we can be dragged in and out of that joy by our circumstances, by the trials and tribulations we all go through. This is a lie spoken by the father of lies in an attempt to destroy what is our inheritance by right, bought and paid for by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ with His precious Blood. Jesus made it clear that we will suffer hardship in this world, but this is not our home, this is not where our treasure is. Our treasure is in the depth of the Joy that is within us, the Joy that cannot be affected by circumstances and pain. The Joy of the Lord.

So, shall we change our language? Do we have the courage to actually say we are joyful when people ask how we are? Can we risk being ridiculed for being blind to our problems and the world's chaos because we say we are joyful? Do I have the courage? Perhaps I would be better to ask myself who I believe.

Do I believe the evidence of my temporal sight and feelings, or do I believe the One who assures each and every one of us that He holds us in His Hands, that He works with us to only bring us good and He never lets us go?

The Joy of the Lord is our strength, just as it was the strength that sustained Jesus during His torture and crucifixion. If we can look past the sin, the pain, the anguish and see the Joy set before us; the Joy that is like an ever-flowing river in our being, then we, too, will be strengthened and sustained, no matter what we are going through.

Prayer:

²⁴“The LORD bless you and keep you;

²⁵The LORD make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you;

²⁶The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace.”