

# "Joy In The Lord!"

## INTRODUCTION:

- I. Let me begin by asking you a few questions.
  - A. I'm not going to ask for a show of hands. I just want you to think of how you would answer these questions.
    1. How HAPPY or how JOYFUL are you to know that you're a Christian?
    2. How do you EXPRESS that joy?
    3. How did you express your joy in the Lord during the FIRST PART of our worship? Would you say you were TRULY REJOICING in the Lord?
  - B. The truth is that many Christians fall short of expressing TRUE JOY – of truly REJOICING in the Lord.
    1. This is often apparent in the lives of so many Christians who seem to LACK real joy – they don't seem very happy, and seem to be bothered by all the cares and worries of daily living.
    2. Unfortunately, this attitude often carries over into our WORSHIP – where there seems to be a general LACK of enthusiasm in singing, and where some simply fall asleep during worship every time.

- II. So why is it that far too many Christians DON'T seem to have real joy in their lives? Why is it that our worship sometimes lacks real, genuine enthusiasm?
  - A. I believe there may be MANY reasons why we don't experience more joy in life, and even in our worship.
    - 1. Therefore, what I would like to do in this lesson is examine a few reasons why SOME do not experience true joy in the Lord.
    - 2. And then I would like to offer some suggestions for how we can ADD joy and rejoicing to our life, and perhaps even bring a little more enthusiasm to our worship.

**BODY:**

- I. To begin, let's make sure we truly understand what JOY really is.
  - A. So, how is joy defined in Scriptures?
    - 1. In the Greek, the most common word for JOY is "chara" (Kara) – which is defined as "joy, delight, gladness" (Vines)
    - 2. The word "chara" or JOY is very closely related to two other words we find in Scripture: "charis" (kar-es) which is translated GRACE, and "chrisma" (kar-rees-ma) which is translated in Scripture as GIFT.

- a. It's been said that we can think of CHARIS and CHARISMA as that which PRODUCES joy – in other words our JOY comes from having received the GIFT of God's GRACE – and CHARA (Joy) as the RESPONSE to a gift which we've received.
  - b. This certainly agrees with the definition of JOY found in the Zondervan Topical Bible: "the emotion excited by expectation or acquisition of good."
- B. It's very important for us to truly understand the close relationship between the JOY we have as Christians and the inexpressible GIFT of God's GRACE.
1. Why? Simply because the Lord EXPECTS us and even COMMANDS us to have JOY or express JOY in direct response to the GIFT of GRACE.
  2. Think of it this way – we experience joy or express joy in direct response to the value of the gift we receive. Isn't that true?
    - a. For example, if I were to give you a dollar, you wouldn't get all that excited. That's not much of a gift.
    - b. You would probably think, with this dollar and 4 more, I can buy a Venti White Chocolate Mocha at Starbucks!

- c. But suppose you just received word that a relative you didn't even know you had left you \$1 million dollars – that's what you see in this picture - \$1 million dollars in cash. How excited would you be about that?
  - (1). You would probably be beside yourself!
  - (2). That's because inheriting a MILLION DOLLARS is a lot more exciting than me giving you a dollar.
  - (3). Your joy and your excitement is in direct proportion to the value of the gift you receive. The greater the value, the greater the joy.

II. Now let's take all this and apply this principle to the joy that you and I as Christians should have.

A. What are some of the things God has given us by His grace?

- 1. The MOST valuable gift God has given us is the gift of eternal life THROUGH the gift of Jesus Christ our Redeemer!
  - a. **Romans 6:23** – *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*
  - b. This involves being FREE from the condemnation of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ!

- c. This also involves being IN FELLOWSHIP with God and with Jesus Christ as we live each day of our life on earth!
  - d. With the promise of freedom from sin and the gift of everlasting life through the blood of Jesus Christ, shouldn't we be HAPPY? Shouldn't we be EXCITED? Shouldn't we be FULL OF JOY and REJOICING?
2. In fact, we could summarize what God has given us with the words of James, the Lord's own brother.
- a. **James 1:17** – *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*
3. Or we could summarize what God has given us with the words of the apostle Paul to the church at Ephesus.
- a. **Ephesians 1:3** – *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...*
- B. How exciting is THAT! We are the recipients of EVERY GOOD GIFT, EVERY PERFECT GIFT and EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING!!
- 1. So, why aren't we excited? Why don't we show REAL JOY and why don't we TRULY REJOICE over these INDESCRIBABLE GIFTS?

- III. I think there are several answers to the question as to why we don't experience or show more JOY over all we have received. So let me suggest a few of these reasons and see if you don't agree.
- A. One of the reasons we don't show more JOY is perhaps because we don't always see the SERIOUSNESS or the MAGNITUDE of our sin.
1. We don't like to think of the fact that sin actually SEPARATES us from God.
    - a. **Isaiah 59:1-2** – *Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.*
    - b. Sin causes us to lose that close, intimate fellowship and relationship with the God of heaven – they separate us from God; they cause His face to be hidden from us.
  2. And we don't always want to think about the fact that sin will CONDEMN us to spiritual death.
    - a. **Romans 6:23** – *For the wages of sin is death...*
  3. And sometimes we don't seem to fully appreciate what condition we would be in if Jesus Christ had never come into the world to die for our sins according to the Scriptures, to be raised again the

third day according to the Scriptures, and to ascend to sit at the right hand of God in heaven as our Savior and our Redeemer.

- a. The apostle Paul reminds us of the condition we would be in if there is no such thing as a resurrection from the dead, and if Jesus had not actually been raised from the dead.
  - b. **1 Corinthians 15:13-19** – *And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. 15 Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up — if in fact the dead do not rise. 16 For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. 17 And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! 18 Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. 19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*
4. To sum up, we tend to overlook the fact that sin is SO TERRIBLE, that God had to send His Only Begotten Son to die for our sins!
  5. Until we realize the terribleness of SIN, we won't appreciate the SALVATION from sin that God offers.

- B. All this leads us to perhaps the MAIN reason why too many Christians lack REAL JOY – namely, we don't appreciate the MAGNITUDE of our GIFT. We may not FULLY appreciate what Jesus has done!
1. For example, Jesus gave His life to reconcile us back into a loving fellowship with God!
    - a. The word RECONCILE simply means to make right, to correct some wrong.
    - b. **2 Corinthians 5:18-19** – *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*
  2. What does the Lord want our reaction to all this to be?
    - a. **John 15:11** – *"These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full."*
    - b. **1 John 1:4** – *"And these things we write to you that your joy may be full."*
  3. The Lord SPOKE these things to us, and the apostle John WROTE these things so that our JOY may be FULL!



- C. Perhaps the problem really boils down to the fact that far too many Christians never take the time to read, and contemplate or understand what Jesus SPOKE or what His apostles WROTE.
1. If we did, I believe we would appreciate...
    - a. The TERRIBLENESS of our sin
    - b. The MAGNITUDE of the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ!
  2. Instead, we allow ourselves to become more influenced by the world and its standards – so much so that we value material things over spiritual things.
  3. And, as a result we sometimes show more JOY over...
    - a. A new job, a promotion, or a raise.
    - b. A new house, or a new car.
    - c. A marriage, or the birth of a child.
  4. I'm NOT suggesting that we should never rejoice over material gifts. We SHOULD be thankful.
  5. But joy over MATERIAL THINGS doesn't begin to compare to the joy we should experience over SPIRITUAL THINGS.

IV. Now let me get down to something that may make some of us a little uncomfortable. I think another reason we are afraid to express real joy in our worship is because we're afraid of overreacting to emotionalism.

A. Now let me say right from the start, there is CERTAINLY a real danger in emotionalism.

1. Emotionalism is simply defined as allowing one's EMOTIONS or one's EXPERIENCE to become more important than what God speaks to us through His divinely inspired Word – the Bible.

a. It's where people depend MORE on what they feel in their heart than what God says in Scripture.

b. It's where people allow their EMOTIONS or their EXPERIENCES to be the TEST of whether or not something is of God – in other words, if you FEEL GOOD about something or you have some kind of EUPHORIC EXPERIENCE, then it is of God.

B. But what seems to be the thing we fear most is that we are going to express our JOY in the Lord, or our expressions of REJOICING in the Lord in such a way that will be seen by others as "showy" or "superficial," or being done simply to attract attention to ourselves.

1. Perhaps we're afraid people will think we're turning Charismatic.

- a. But do you remember what those words CHARA, CHARIS, and CHARISMA means: CHARA means JOY, CHARIS means GRACE, and CHARISMA means GIFT.
    - (1). We experience REAL JOY over the GIFT of God's GRACE.
  - b. Maybe in that sense, we all need to be a little Charismatic – as long as we're using the BIBLE'S definition of CHARISMA!
2. Unfortunately, the secular DICTIONARY definition of Charismatic means: *Of, relating to, or being a type of Christianity that emphasizes personal religious experience and divinely inspired powers, as of healing, prophecy, and the gift of tongues.* (American Heritage Dictionary)
- a. I'm NOT one of those, and I'm certainly not suggesting we need to practice that sort of thing here.
3. However, rather than go to the ONE EXTREME of being Charismatic as the WORLD defines it, we have OFTEN gone to the OTHER EXTREME of UNEMOTIONAL FORMALISM – where little or no emotions of ANY kind are shown or expressed.
- a. We're afraid to express REAL JOY – afraid of REALLY REJOICING in the Lord.

- b. And so sometimes our song service sounds more like we're at a funeral rather than a celebration of the gift of God's grace.
  - c. Sometimes our prayers become more like speeches to God (where we repeat the same things in every prayer), rather than our prayers being true, genuine expressions of our heart for the indescribable gift of God's amazing grace through the blood of Jesus Christ.
- C. Listen to the words of Jesus about this kind of worship
1. **Matthew 15:7-9** – speaking to the Pharisees of His day, Jesus said, *Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: 8 "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*
    - a. To put it simply, worship that is not from the heart is just plain wrong!
    - b. The Pharisees of Jesus' day had formalized and ritualized worship so that it became so routine, you could go through every act of worship and never ONCE worship from the heart.
    - c. Sadly, in many places we've done or are DOING the same thing.

D. Now please don't leave here saying the preacher is trying to get us to start showing EMOTIONS during worship services. I'm not saying that at all.

1. But neither do I want you to say "well preacher, it's a cultural thing."

a. If having the freedom to honestly and genuinely express real joy in ones heart is a cultural thing, then maybe some of us may need to get a little culture.

2. Neither do I want you to say "well preacher, the Bible says things must be done decently and in order." I agree with doing things decently and in order.

a. But in the context of **1 Corinthians 14** Paul was talking about a half-dozen or so tongue-speakers doing their thing at the same time a half-dozen or so prophets where trying to do theirs. It was mass confusion, and total disorder.

b. We often take that passage completely out of context and use it to say of something is done that is somewhat out of the ordinary, or contrary to our traditional way of doing things – we're not doing things decently and in order.

- c. Brethren, expressions of JOY or THANKSGIVING – even spontaneous expressions of JOY and THANKSGIVING – are NOT INDECENT and DISORDERLY.
3. And neither do I want you to say, "well preacher, I think those who do that sort of thing are just trying to draw attention to themselves – they are just showing off."
- a. Perhaps that's true in some cases.
  - b. But I can assure you that's NOT the case with the overwhelmingly vast majority of those who have the freedom to express their JOY in the Lord. Their expressions of joy come STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART.
4. Maybe we need to pray the prayer of David: *"Restore to me the joy of Your salvation..."* – **Psalm 51:12**

IV. Brethren, it's possible for there to be BOTH JOY AND ORDER in our worship.

- A. As I said before – so let me repeat this again so no one will misunderstand – I'm not promoting or encouraging spontaneous expressions of JOY or THANKSGIVING in our worship.
  - 1. Most of us probably feel too uncomfortable to express ourselves in this manner – and that's just fine.

- B. I guess what I'm REALLY trying to say is that we need more JOY and TRUE EXPRESSIONS of REJOICING in the Lord to all aspects of our worship.
1. I'm not suggesting that we suddenly turn Charismatic as the world defines the term.
  2. I'm simply saying that in reacting to one extreme, let's not go to the other and take away the joy of being a Christian!
  3. Let's have the same attitude about worship and praise that people in Biblical times had. Let's be like them:
    - a. **Joel 2:23** – *"Be glad then, you children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God."*
    - b. **Psalm 122:1** – *"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"*
    - c. **Philippians 4:4** – *"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"*
    - d. **Ephesians 5:18-20** – *"...be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... "*

- e. **1 Peter 1:6-9** – *In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith — the salvation of your souls.*

## CONCLUSION:

- I. Someone once said far too many Christians enter the worship of our Creator and Savior with the same enthusiasm and vigor of those filling out their income tax returns on April 14th!
- A. Brethren, this should not be!
1. And if it is, then we need to allow the Word of God to do its work:  
**Jeremiah 15:16** – *"Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by your name, O Lord God of hosts."*
  2. If we would spend more time with the Word of God, we would learn that we also have been called of God...



- a. Called out of sin and its consequences.
  - b. Called into a wonderful relationship through the Spirit with Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, where all can be made new!
3. And when we truly have that knowledge of God's great gift, then joy will be a natural reaction and also a wonderful blessing:
- a. **Psalm 5:11-12** – *But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; let those also who love Your name be joyful in You. 12 For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; with favor You will surround him as with a shield.*
- B. Do you truly rejoice in the Lord always? Do you have that kind of joy?  
Do you want that joy?
1. Then come to the Lord in complete faith and obedience and accept the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord!
    - a. Believe that Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, repent of any and all sins you have committed in the past, and then be buried with Christ in baptism for the remission of sins, and be raised to walk in a new life in Christ.
  2. Or, if you're a Christian whose life lacks joy because of sin in your life, then come to the Lord confessing those sins and accept the gift of the cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ.