WALKING IN JOY

**DATE: 12/16/2015 Wed.**

**TEXT: Galatians 5:22, 23**

**INTRODUCTION**

Staying Positive in a Negative World is a very Difficult Thing

In a World of Uncertainty, the only thing Certain, is God!

We are studying the Fruit of the Spirit

This fruit can be divided into 3 categories:

1. Upward toward God—love, joy, peace

**2.** Outward toward others—longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness

**3.** Inward toward ourselves -—faith, meekness, and temperance

We come to the 2nd in our list of virtues

Throughout the Bible, Christians are commanded to have Joy

**Nehemiah 8:10 *– “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”***

We find the word ***“joy”*** 60 times and the word ***“rejoice”*** 72 times, in the NT

We’ve been told that Joy means *to have great happiness*

But Joy is an inner Contentment produced by God that is not dependent upon external Circumstances

Joy and happiness are not necessarily the same

The Biblical word ***“joy”*** comes from a word meaning *it comes from the Lord*

The Greek words for *Grace* and *Joy* are almost identical

If we have truly experienced God’s Grace, then we know the Joy of the Lord

**I Thessalonians 1:6 – *“And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost”***

Note the order of the verse ***“Love, joy…”***

You cannot know the Joy of the Lord until you know the Love of God

Let’s stand to read God’s Word and then begin to think on this thought

**“Walking in Joy”**

Read **vs. 22, 23**

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “REASONS” FOR OUR JOY**

The Believer’s Joy is connected to several things

**A. The ‘Possession of Salvation’**

-- Happiness is based upon Circumstances

-- Joy is based upon a Condition

Joy comes from a right relationship with God

Man was created to Fellowship with God

**Isaiah 61:10 – *“I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels”***

Isaiah was not Rejoicing because he had money, a nice house, the latest fashion, or good health

His Rejoicing was based upon the fact that he was clothed in the garments of salvation

He was a saved man

Too many believers sit around looking like God died and they just got back from the funeral / Why?

Because there isn't enough money in the account, they don't have the latest fashion, or their neighbor has a better car

Many Christians allow circumstances to ruin their Joy

-- Our Joy shouldn’t be dependent on whether or not the bills are paid

It's nice when they are, and we can praise God for it

But that is not the reason for our Rejoicing

-- We do not Rejoice because our health is good and everything seems to be going well

We should be Thankful and Rejoice over these things,

But they are not the basis of our Joy

These are all circumstances, and circumstances change

If we live for these things and base our Joy on them,

We will change when they change

Instead our Joy should be based upon our relationship with the Unchangeable Rock of our salvation

God said in **Malachi 3:6 – *“For I am the LORD, I change not”***

This world can fall apart, and the stock market can come crashing down, but God will still be the same

We are to Rejoice in spite of circumstances whether they are good or bad, because we are God's people

Being saved we have everything to Rejoice about

**Luke 10:20b – *“but … rejoice, because your names are written in heaven”***

We Rejoice because of …

**The ‘Possession of our Salvation’**

**B. The ‘Presence of the Saviour’**

**Psalm 16:11 – *“Thou wilt show me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore”***

Here we see the Believer's Joy ***“In the Lord”***

There’s the *Path of Salvation*, but then there is the *Presence of the Saviour*

We need to notice 3 important things in **Psalm 16:11**

**1.** Joy is found only in God’s presence

David said, ***“in Thy presence is fulness of joy”***

**2.** Real Joy can only be realized by God's people

***“Thou wilt show me the path of life”***

And that …

**3.** It’s not simply Joy, but the fulness of Joy

Some Believers are happy, but don’t have Joy

**I John 1:3, 4 *–“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full”***

We Rejoice because of …

**The ‘Presence of the Saviour’**

**C. The ‘Purity of the Saint’**

**Psalm 51:12 – *“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation”***

One of the biggest reasons for the Christian's lack of Joy is unconfessed sin

In **Psalm 51** David was seeking restored fellowship with God

David had walked with God in the past, but his sin had gotten in the way

He had committed adultery, had Uriah killed, and was now attempting to cover it up

David learned a hard lesson

You can be successful as a hypocrite for a while,

… but you mark it down, nothing can be hid from Almighty God

God will be patience with us for a while … but

**Numbers 32:23 *– “But if ye will not do so, (obey God) behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out”***

God sent Nathan to deal with David and he repented and sought God's forgiveness

Having been brought face to face with his sin

David approached God on the only grounds acceptable

His mercy

**vs. 1-3 –** *“****Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions” “Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin” “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me”***

 These were the words of a broken man

A man who needed God’s Forgiveness

David could not walk with God as long as there was sin in his life

**Amos 3:3 – *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed”***

Mark it down, God does not agree with sin and will deal with it

**Isaiah 59:2 –** *“****But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear”***

David's sin not only cost him his Fellowship

But it also cost him his Joy

David prayed in **v.12 …**

*“****Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation”***

Only after forgiveness and restoration could David experience Joy again

Sin had severed his fellowship with God

He was still saved, but he had lost his Joy

Many Believers today are in the same place

Believers have something in their life that is hindering their fellowship with the Lord

And they fail to realize it, or worst, won’t make it right

We Rejoice because of …

**The ‘Purity of the Saint’**

**D. The ‘Practice of the Scriptures’**

**John 15:10, 11 *– “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love”***

***“These things have I spoken unto you, that My Joy might remain in you, and that your Joy might be full”***

A Remaining and Full Joy is what Jesus wants for every Believer

The word *“****full”*** means *to be completely full, lacking nothing*

However, such Joy is dependent upon our obedience to the Word of God

***“If ye keep My commandments,”***

Do you know why some people are miserable?

They don’t / won’t … obey God

Obedience to His word is a condition of Joy

We Rejoice because of …

**The ‘Practice of Scripture’**

**E. The ‘Perception of Sacrifice’**

To have Joy we must be able to see beyond the present circumstances

The Apostle Paul while sitting in a Roman prison awaiting execution for preaching the Gospel,

Wrote to the Philippian Church …

**Philippians 2:17 – *“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all”***

Sacrifice in service will reveal the true state of a man's heart, like no other test

The word ***“offered”*** refers to the drink offering of the Levitical sacrifices

Paul used the same word when writing to Timothy

**II Timothy 4:6 – *“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand”***

Paul was using this comparison to describe his own martyrdom

Paul found great Joy in being poured out like a drink offering for the cause of Christ

His life had been sacrificed to God for the purpose of reaching others with the Gospel

Now, even in death, he would die sacrificially and Joyfully to the glory of God

Paul was Joyful, even when his execution was imminent, because his Perception of Service was right

His focus was not himself, but on Christ / Others

The Apostle Paul was a man who continually suffered for the Cause of Christ, yet he remained Joyful

**II Corinthians 7:4 – *“Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you: I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding Joyful in all our tribulation”***

**THE “REASONS FOR” OUR JOY**

**II. THE “RESISTANCE AGAINST” JOY**

In spite of the Holy Spirit’s work in us, there are aspects of life that are continually resisting our Joy in the Lord

I think of 3 areas that can affect our Joy

**A. Bitterness**

**Hebrews 12:15 – *“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the Grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”***

Bitterness will suck the Joy right out of you

**B. Suffering**

We can avoid bitterness by receiving God’s Grace to forgive

But we cannot avoid Suffering

Suffering comes to all of us and we have no control over it

We do, however, have a choice in how we respond to Suffering

When we abide in Christ, while Suffering …

We find that Suffering actually works to further our Joy

Let’s look at what the Bible says …

**I Peter 1:6-8 …**

**Romans 5:1-4 …**

**C. Persecution**

**Matthew 5:10-12 …**

Sometimes in the heat of battle, when the enemy is unloading everything he has at us, it is easy to get our mind off of Christ, and on ourselves

However, we must keep the Right Perspective

We need to remember we are Victors in Jesus Christ

He has already – (**Colossians 2:15**) ***“spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them”***

The Christianity of the Bible is not a peaches-and-cream religion

We are, therefore, commanded to …

**I Thessalonians 5:16 – *“Rejoice evermore”***

You say, Preacher, how do we respond in difficult circumstances?

We Rejoice!

**Philippians 4:4 *– “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice”***

**THE “REASONS FOR” OUR JOY**

**THE “RESISTANCE AGAINST” JOY**

**III. THE “REINSTATEMENT OF” OUR JOY**

Joy is a By-Product of Obedience

**Proverbs 16:3 *– “Commit thy works unto the LORD, and thy thoughts shall be established”***

There are 4 Ways to Develop Joy

**A. Through ‘Singing’**

7 times in the Bible we are Commanded to make …

***“a Joyful Noise unto the Lord”***

**Psalms 66:1; 81:1; 95:1, 2; 98:4, 6; 100:1**

**James 5:13 – *“Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms”***

**Ephesians 5:19 – *“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”***

**B. Through ‘Serving’**

**Acts 20:24 *– “But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God”***

True Love helps meet needs, which produces Joy

**C. Through ‘Soul-winning’ / Discipleship**

**Philippians 4:1 – *“Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord,”***

**Proverbs 11:30 – *“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise”***

Seeing people genuinely saved should cause us to Rejoice

**D. Through ‘Stewardship’ / Giving**

**Quote:** Someoneonce said –*“a cold heart and a stingy hand go together”*

**Quote:** Someone else said – *“Laughter is an instant vacation. Giving is … a 2 week cruise, with pay”*

**Acts 20:35 – *“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive”***

**II Corinthians 8:2, 3 – *“How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep***

***…poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality” “For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;”***

Giving to meet needs causes Rejoicing and Joy in someone life

When the opportunity arises and I’m able to give it brings me Joy

**CONCLUSION**

The Believer’s Joy begins with Salvation

Those who have never experienced the unspeakable Joy and Peace that Salvation brings will forever be searching for a substitute

But those who have experienced Salvation, can Testify of its Satisfaction

Even Believer’s, unfortunately can lose their Joy for a number of reasons, though

This does not mean they have lost their Salvation

Only the Joy of it!

But just has David did, we can ask that Joy be restored unto us

**Psalm 51:12a – *“Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation;”***

It is God’s Desire that we be a Joyful People

He wants to give us Joy through His Spirit

**Hebrews 12:2 *– “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; 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”***

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