

The Joy of the Lord

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Nehemiah 8:10b - The joy of the Lord is your strength.

One of those statements that most Christians use.

Joy and happiness differences are source and longevity.

Happiness – positive circumstances and often fleeting.

Joy – enduring contentment rooted in God's presence and promises, even through suffering.

Context and application of the passage:

Who was Nehemiah, who was Ezra – original scrolls.

These are combined books. Nehemiah was a Jewish leader – a Persian cup bearer.

Granted permission to return to Jerusalem and acted as Governor.

Ezra – priest, scribe, leader wrote the book of Ezra and many scholars believe 1st and 2nd Chronicles.

We read in chapter 6, the nation of Israel had miraculously rebuilt the main structures, walls and towers in 52 days leveled 70 years earlier.

Much struggle, danger and warfare to get this job completed.

Let's start at Nehemiah 7:73 "So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the Nethinim, and all Israel dwelt in their cities."

So now it's time for their first feast with the physical structures rebuilt. Very emotional

Leviticus 23:24 – feast of trumpets, Rosh Hashanah, Jewish new year, first of the 10 days of awe. Day of Atonement Yom Kippur on day 10

Nehemiah 8 is all about the rebuilding of the spiritual structure.

Nehemiah 8:1-10

Verses 1-3

All gathered and were attentive
Desired the word – it had been years

Verses 4-7

Ezra and the others to read
When the book was opened people stood up Ezra first blessed the Lord, the great God
Amen, amen, and worship

Verse 8

Some believe help was needed because of language, Hebrew vs Chaldee spoken in Babylon
Many believe help was needed because many had become ignorant.

Verse 9

Sadness and sorrow from sin and falling short Nehemiah reminds them the day is a holy day of celebration.

Verse 10

Charge to go celebrate, provide for those less fortunate and remember the feelings of joy and thankfulness associated with atonement.

Principle of the passage:

- Spiritual renewal comes through the transformative power of God's Word.
- Attentive listening
- A hearing heart of understanding
- Repentance and forgiveness of sin
- And joyful obedient celebration

Personal application of the passage:

- The joy of the Lord is an enduring thankfulness and
- Celebration of the atoning work of Jesus
- When we have the joy of the Lord we are relying on
- God's power and promises rather than ourselves
- The joy of the Lord means we trust God more than
- Ourselves. We rely on His goodness and the unchanging promises of His Word

Why do we know all this and still hurt?

- How can sometimes we smile and act like everything is great and still not fully have the joy of the Lord?

Let's go a little deeper – is it godly sorrow?

2 Corinthians 7: 8-10 “For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance *leading* to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death”

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

We know all of this and there is still that feeling. Something is missing, something is still off, regret and deep hurt is like a rip tide – looks calm on the surface until it drags you under.

Why is this important, because we all strive to live in the calm for survival and push down or hide the deep disturbances within.

We will gravitate toward escape or avoidance behavior.

Distractions – some healthy some unhealthy – sports

Work – family – eating – drinking - social networking - gaming, anything for something to keep the hurt pushed down. Anything to keep the waters calm.

Regret and deep hurt usually have their roots in unforgiveness. These are often blended together

- Regret is an unforgiveness of ourselves
- Deep hurt is an unforgiveness of others

A hope and a future today

Inner healing prayer ministry – taking Jesus back to the broken part of our soul and receive freedom through forgiveness.

Testimony of a personal phone call from someone who did wrong – that feeling – self inner healing. Prayed, asked Jesus to go back to that hurt and forgive him and forgive us

Principle:

The joy of the Lord is found in His presence

Colossians 3:12-17

12. Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

13. bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.

14. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

15. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.