

The Gift of Joy

On this third week of advent I want to focus on the gift of joy.

Joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit, it's an attribute of God's nature that we received in fullness the moment we are born again.

Galatians 5:22-23 NKJV "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law."

Joy and happiness mean the same thing: cheerfulness, calm, delight, and gladness. The difference is the source.

- The source of joy is God, and as long as you abide in Him, you can choose to experience it in any and every circumstance.
- The source of happiness is your experiences, you only experience happiness when all your ducks are in a row.

Satan always takes what we have received from God by faith as a gift and convinces us that we have to feel something before we can experience it.

Joy is based on what God has done/doing inside of me.

Happiness is tied to certain external circumstances.

Happiness is based on what is going on around me.

The foundation of joy.

Psalms 105:37-43 NKJV "He also brought them out with silver and gold, And there was none feeble among His tribes. Egypt was glad when they departed, For the fear of them had fallen upon them. He spread a cloud for a covering, And fire to give light in the night. The people asked, and He brought quail, And satisfied them with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and water gushed out; It ran in the dry places like a river. For He remembered His holy promise, And Abraham His servant. He brought out His people with joy, His chosen ones with gladness."

We have to remember that the Exodus story is a prophetic picture of our story.

They had been slaves to the power of darkness, being dominated by the curse of sin and death.

Because of the body and blood of the perfect lamb, God's people left Egypt with their silver and gold and there was not a sick one among them.

Their joy was based on a God who always fulfills His promises!

As amazing as the Old Testament covenant was for God's people, we have a covenant based on better promises.

Hebrews 8:6 NKJV “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.

Jesus’ promise

John 10:10 NKJV “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

3 John 1:2 KJV “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

Jesus fulfilled promises.

1 Peter 2:24 NKJV “who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.”

Jesus bore the root of humanities problems (sin) and the fruit of sickness and disease so that we could live lives of divine health.

2 Corinthians 8:9 NKJV “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.”

The same way the Israelites left the slavery of Egypt with prosperity and health, because of the finished work of Jesus we leave the kingdom of darkness and enter into God’s kingdom with prosperity and health.

Our joy comes from believing that Jesus already fulfilled his promises.

God’s purposes for joy

1) Our joy blesses the Lord.

Psalms 100:1-3 “Make a joyful shout to the Lord, all you lands! 2 Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before His presence with singing. 3 Know that the Lord, He is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

When God sees his children experiencing joy it blesses his heart because first and foremost, he is a father.

Think about how you feel when you watch your kids or grandkids experiencing joy?

2) Joy produces health in our bodies.

Proverbs 17:22 GW “A joyful heart is good medicine, but depression drains one’s strength.”

Benefits of feeling more joy.

Joy promotes a healthier lifestyle; boosts the immune system; fights stress and pain; supports longevity.

3) Joy is one of the signs the kingdom has come.

Romans 14:17 “NKJV for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

There is something radiant and inviting about the face of someone that is joyful, joy attracts people like no other thing.

Joy doesn't always have an immediate effect on others because everyone is joyful sometime, but when people see you being joyful in the midst of all of life's circumstances, they want to know how they can experience it for themselves.

How do we cultivate joy?

You choose to rejoice.

Re means again; *joice* means to produce joy.

Every time we choose to rejoice it produces joy.

God tells us to rejoice 238 times in the Bible, it sounds pretty important to me.

Let's look at a few.

Psalms 9:1-2 NKJV “I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.”

Psalms 5:11 NKJV “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.”

Psalms 28:7 NKJV “The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.”

Rejoicing is a choice.

Philippians 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!”

How often does God ask us to rejoice?

What can you rejoice over?

The God of the universe loves you and wants to have an intimate relationship with you the same way he did with His son.

John 17:26 NKJV “And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.””

God has a plan for your life.

Jeremiah 29:11 GNT “I alone know the plans I have for you, plans to bring you prosperity and not disaster, plans to bring about the future you hope for.”

God gave you His nature so all of your relationships would prosper.

Galatians 5:22-23 TPT “But the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit within you is divine love in all its varied expressions: joy that overflows, peace that subdues, patience that endures, kindness in action, a life full of virtue, faith that prevails, gentleness of heart, and strength of spirit. Never set the law above these qualities, for they are meant to limitless.”

God also gave us a future hope of his eternal presence.

2 Corinthians 5:8 TPT “We live with a joyful confidence, yet at the same time we take delight in the thought of leaving our bodies behind to be at home with the Lord.”

My prayer is that we will be a people who develop lifestyles of rejoicing so that we can live with the joy that is contagious and draws many to the Lord.