

# Seeking the Lord

## #4 - Fullness of Joy

Depression and oppression are not your lot.

*"You have made known to me the path of life. You will fill me with joy in your presence..." - Psalm 16:11*

*"Of his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace." - John 1:16*

**Scriptures:** Psalm 16 & 30:5 | Lam. 3:18-25 | Isaiah 61:1-4 | Rev. 19:10 | Luke 10:17-23

### The Three Lacks

Let's begin with the opposite of the fullness of joy. If you have been following this series, you will have seen that we are to be transformed in the secret place and that God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. When I was a student at UC Berkeley, one of the nurses mentioned that the campus had an unusually high instance of depression. It's no accident that the types of liberal teachings and debauchery that are commonplace on the campus have led to this epidemic. God has a plan for your life and so does Satan. Satan's kingdom is filled with despair, depression, lies, false hope, and the fleeting pleasures of sin. It is based on lies and self worship. God's kingdom is eternal righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

The purpose of this teaching is to help you get the revelation that God has a fullness of joy for his people that eradicates all depression. Let's begin with the three lacks.

*Apathy is the lack of passion. Depression is the lack of joy. Emptiness is the lack of fullness.*

How many people do you know who suffer from one or all of these? How about yourself? God is a God of fullness. His presence saturates the whole universe and he wants to fill you today! Are you ready to swim in a life of passion, joy, and fullness?

### Forgiveness and Joy

In the first part of this series we covered breaking up your fallow ground. These are the hardened places of our hearts that resist God and cling on to sin and evil thought patterns. It's appropriate to begin here in this study on the fullness of God's joy. Charles Finney writes that sin blocks joy. He writes that because many people have never really thoroughly repented of *all the areas of sin* in their lives that they live passionless and joyless lives. If you haven't done this, return back to the first study and go through it completely. It will be no good to you to take you through all of this if you fail in the basic foundations of living a life fully devoted to God.

The second aspect to walking in the fullness of God's joy is forgiveness. Jesus tells a parable of a man who

was forgiven much. (Matt. 18:32-35) But his heart was wicked. He wouldn't forgive a fellow servant a small amount. The parable teaches us that God will not forgive us if we will not forgive others. Do not be deceived into thinking you can harbor bitterness, unresolved offense, or resentment against others or yourself and be right with God. The Word of God says that man was "delivered to the torturers" until he should pay back what he owed.

*Have I made my point clear? Forgive! Don't let bitterness rob you of joy.*

Let it go and trust that God will bring all things into his righteous judgment in due time. Vengeance is the Lord's, whether it happens now or later.

## **Re-joyce**

The apostle Paul instructs the church in the book of Philippians to "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, Rejoice!" Notice that it's a command. A lot of people mistakenly believe that joy is simply an emotion. But it isn't. It is a reality of Heaven that we get to step into *regardless of our current emotional state*. The spiritual world is superior to the emotional, intellectual, and physical world we live in. Once you step into the eternal truth of the spirit world, your emotions and everything else will follow. Don't be dominated by your negative circumstances, emotions, or the "wind and the waves."

I like to explain the secret of the command to rejoice this way. It means to RE – JOICE. Or return to joy.

How do you do that when you are going through a hard time?

(Read Psalm 16 and the Lamentations passages now)

## **Remembering the Works of the Lord**

As you have seen in the passages just read, both David and Jeremiah call to remembrance the works, the faithfulness, and the goodness of God. It is this refocusing that causes us to return to joy. In the presence of the Lord we can't help but be joyful. So if we lack joy, it's a sign that we've stopped seeking him. We have stopped beholding him. We have focused on our problems instead of the solution.

There are so many examples of this principle in Scripture. I call it the power of the testimony or remembering the works of the Lord. Here are a few to give you a mental picture of how to begin to operate in this powerful truth.

After Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt with mighty signs and wonders, God commanded the children of Israel to observe feasts. One of these was the Passover feast. What is the purpose of this? It is to remember what God did by delivering them from the land of slavery. (It is also a prophetic picture of Christ's coming and sacrifice.) The Israelites were to remember what God had done for them. Why? Because it would give them joy and courage the next time they were facing a trial. Another example is seen when Joshua leads the Israelites through the Jordan river. God miraculously causes the river to stop flowing so the whole nation could walk through on dry ground. Afterwards, the Israelites took stones from the river and set them up in a heap. Why? To remember. You see God has ordained for you to take stones of remembrance from the impossibilities in your life that God has caused you to walk through so that every time you see them you will "return to joy" and be strengthened in your faith. The last example I will share is of Jesus when he feeds the five thousand and the four thousand. His disciples were talking about what the "yeast of the Pharisees" meant. They thought it was because they didn't have any bread. Jesus rebukes them because they failed to understand the power of the testimony. It's like he's saying, "Guys, how many times do I have to multiply bread miraculously for you to get it? I am Almighty God. You do not need to fear

lack when I am with you.” They were not remembering the works of the Lord and thus were led astray. (Praise God... they eventually got it! And so can we.)

One of the most practical ways to re-joyce in the Lord is to keep a journal of answered prayers, testimonies, and promises from the Lord. Begin to declare those over your life whenever you feel that foul spirit of depression or anxiety try to come upon you. You will see that a shift in the spirit will soon take place. God did it before and he will surely do it again.

## **Isaiah 61**

This is one of my personal favorite sections of Scripture. It is the messianic call and by faith we can also grab hold of it. (Read Isaiah passage now.) This passage is worthy of many sermons in itself.

If you have ever watched TV, most of you would have seen a lottery commercial. It's usually something like this. Someone shows up at an ordinary person's house and tells them they just won the lottery... millions of dollars. Their financial problems are now non-existent. What is the result? They immediately start twirling, dancing, shouting, crying and the like. What is the principle I'm getting at?

*When you are freed from bondage, your only appropriate response is joy.*

This passage is about the utter annihilation of injustice, bondage, and oppression. Jesus Christ our chief cornerstone has paved the way for us also to walk in this life of victory. This revelation will produce an eruption of joy in your life.

The last point I am going to mention here is that worship is connected to joy. God wants to make an exchange. The spirit of heaviness (despair, depression) for the garments of praise! If you will begin to worship the Lord regardless of how you feel, you will soon find yourself arrayed in a glorious new outfit of praise and light. The heaviness that was once upon you will be gone.

## **Revelation and Joy**

(Read Luke section now) There is much that can be said here. But the key passage I want you to see is where it says that “Jesus full of the joy of the Holy Spirit said.” He was overjoyed because revelation had come to his followers and to babes, and it had been hidden from the wise and learned. The disciples were rejoicing in the victory of demons being cast out and the authority of God. Jesus redirects this rejoicing to the fact that our names have been written in Heaven. (I do not believe this passage means we are not allowed to be happy to see demons come out, healings, or the mighty works of the Lord. But rather in comparison to the fact that we are eternally saved and loved, that is the greater reason to rejoice!)

Jesus tells his disciples that their eyes are blessed to see what they see and to know what they know. I'd like to propose to you that revelation brings joy. Thus as you spend time seeking the face of God, ask him to speak to you. He will give you revelation though Scripture, visions, and his voice. You will find great joy.

## Questions and putting it into practice

1. Do an inventory of your heart. Is there anyone you need to forgive? Write down their names. If appropriate, reach out to them and try to reconcile. Lastly, don't forget to examine anything you may be holding against yourself.

2. What can you begin to do to regularly remember the works of the Lord? Write down a few answered prayers or blessings from God right now. If you haven't made a habit of writing down these victories, will you commit to doing so starting now?

3. Read Psalm 30:5. How is it sometimes necessary to embrace pain and suffering? What is God's promise on the other side?

4. When you feel overwhelmed by emotion or negative circumstances, write down three things you can do based on this study to “re-joyce.”

5. Meditate on the three promises from Isaiah 61: beauty for ashes, oil of joy for mourning, garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Write down any insights you get from the Lord after spending time in prayer.