

Bailey
2/22/54

"The Joy of the Lord"

North Union
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Am

Scripture Lesson:-

Text:- St. John 15: 11. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."

Introduction:- As Jesus prayed for his disciples under the shadow of the cross, he prayed that they might have his joy. His prayer was expressed in these words: "And these things I speak in the world, that they might have joy fulfilled in themselves."

The joy of Jesus for his disciples was the joy of his presence. The Psalmist spoke of the joy which comes from the presence of the Lord: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore". (Psalm 16:11). We are well aware of the joy which the presence of certain friends and relatives may bring to our lives. We make frequent journeys, often traveling long distances, in order to enjoy the presence of such friends.

While these friends and relatives bring to us much joy, there is a certain need in our lives which they cannot meet. They cannot break the power of sin which has inflicted a deadly blight upon every life. There are inner depths in our natures, needing encouragement and comfort which they cannot reach. There are deep waters through which we are called to pass that they cannot fathom. There are valleys with shadows, into which we descend, that are so rugged and steep that our dearest friends cannot descend into the depths with us.

Only Christ can give his presence amid all the changing and shifting scenes of life. "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee". Separations are necessary with earthly friends and relatives. Time lays a heavy toll on the presence of our earthly friends. The children about our family table soon grow up, establish their own homes and go their various ways. The ranks of our earth-

ly friends are thinned by the coming of the grim reaper, with the passing of the years. Only the presence of Christ can abide, unchanged and unmarred by the changes of time. He is the Christ of all the ages. Before the world was, he was, and his glory was manifest with the father's glory. After the sun, moon and stars have run their courses, having turned to charred cinders and dust, Christ will still remain in his glory as King of Kings and Lord of lords.

I.

The fulness of Christ's presence in our lives means the coming of new life, and the banishment of fear. The new life coming through his love is described by the Apostle John: "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him" (I John 4:9).

The fear is banished through the presence of Christ shedding his love abroad in our hearts. The love of God is described by the same apostle. He says, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this evil world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment, he that feareth is not made perfect in love." *Joy is made perfect in love is what all desire.*

The joy of Christ's presence is the joy of his salvation. It is the joy of sins forgiven for the sinner, as he enters the new life in Christ. It is the joy of assurance in the consciousness of being accepted with God through the witness of the Holy Spirit. Isaiah speaks of the joy of this great salvation. "I will greatly rejoice in the presence of 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."

Christ's joy is so strong and so abiding as to be manifest under every condition of life, whether favorable or unfavorable. Many are the wells out of which the righteous will draw water in the course of this earthly pilgrimage. None can escape the wells of affliction, disappointment and sorrow. But the water of life which Christ imparts is sufficient to sweeten the bitter waters, even amid life's severest trials.

II.

The joy of Christ is the joy of his word. He says: "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you." Christ's words, his promises his revealed will as found in the Bible, are a source of joy. The prophet Jeremiah speaks of the joy of the Word of God: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." (Jer., 15:16).

The joy of Christ is the joy of the Holy Spirit. Paul says: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17). Joy in the Holy Spirit is the joy of assurance, the joy of comfort, the joy of the cleansed heart and the fullness of the Spirit. This joy is also the joy of guidance, the joy of power, the joy of undaunted courage to do the whole will of God.

The joy of Christ is the joy of answered prayer. He said: "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (John 16:24). There are many things which we can obtain only through prayer. The victories of (the soul are obtained by way of intercession) at the throne of grace. The joy of the victories come through answered prayer, more than recompense for all the time, energy, soul struggle and effort which we have invested in prayer. The greater the soul struggle through which we may have passed in a Gethsemane of prayer the greater will be the joy of the answered prayer

III.

The joy of Jesus sustained him at the cross. The sustaining power of his joy at the cross is described by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews: "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" (Hebrews. 12: 2). Thy joy of Christ was sufficient to sustain him at the cross; is sufficient to sustain his disciples amid all the conflicts of life. The joy of Christ is sufficient to enable us to heed the exhortations of the apostle when he said; "Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thess. 5: 16-18).

Conclusion:- Yes, the joy of Jesus was the one sustaining attribute of his life. It was with him always. He relied upon it. It helped him and sustained him all through life. Have you that joy? He said that you might have it. "That my joy might remain in you". Do you have that joy?