

Sunday, August 20, 2023

The other side of suffering; Joy

We all go through some kind of suffering in our lives.

No-one likes going through suffering, but there is a purpose to the suffering. Suffering draws us closer to God, helps us grow spiritually, and prepares us to help others through their suffering. Without suffering, many would go through life, never giving God a second thought. It is at our lowest points that we cry out for God. He is faithful to hear our prayer and comfort us in the storm.

We as believers in Jesus Christ can experience Joy, during/and after the suffering. The mention of Joy happens over 200 times in the bible. We need to understand what it is.

The Greek word χαρά, "Chara" - is defined as "the hope for the future. "Joy related to Hope."

Closely related to gladness and happiness, although Joy is more a state of being than an emotion, a result of a choice. Joy is one of the fruits of the spirit. Having Joy is part of the experience of being a Christian.

The concept of Joy is taken from:

Phil. 2:1-2 - "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ (and there is), if there is any comfort from virtue love (and there is), if there is any fellowship with the spirit (and there is), if there is any mercy and compassions (and there is), bring to completion my joy that you might be thinking the same things (having the mind of Christ), having the same virtue love, united in soul, intent on one objective."

Your one objective is maximum glorification of God.

Encouragement in Christ - Encouragement in Greek is paraklēsis, paraklesis - meaning encouragement or exhortation. The best understanding of the word seems to be "encouragement" that comes from Christian commitment.

Virtue love - (a) Respect and devotion demonstrated by man yet based on a power greater than man himself; (b) Love based on the character of God and expressed from the source of divine truth in the soul. (Synonym: Soul love)

fellowship with the spirit - The gift of the Holy Spirit and the believer's conscious experience of His indwelling

and activity are the starting-points of the apostle's appeal. He takes it as a commonly accepted truth which can be verified by personal experience that the believers know this "**koinonia**" with the Holy Spirit in all his gracious ministry to their hearts and lives.

Koinwvía, "koinonia" - ① close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship.

mercy and compassions -

mercy/affection - σπλάγχνον, *splagchnon* -

② as often in the ancient world, inner body parts served as reference for psychological aspects (καρδία, *kardia*- the thinking part of the soul): of the seat of the emotions, in our usage a transference is made to the rendering heart.

Compassions - οίκτιρμός, *oiktirmos* - display of concern over another's misfortune, pity, mercy.

Finally, there is "tenderness and compassion." Again, these terms refer to the mercies shown to believers by the Lord. And these 4 things bring to the believer, a Joy that points to the Hope (confident expectation) in Christ.

1. There is encouragement from being in union with Christ. No-one can encourage us in times of suffering like our Lord can!

2. There is comfort from virtue love because you have entered the door of Hope on God's agenda into the unique spiritual life. This type of Hope - ελπίς "Elpis" means "confident expectation." (Thought toward the future)

Assurance and comfort in relation to things in the future, a mental attitude of confident expectation toward something magnificent but not yet present.

1 Cor. 13:13 - But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

This highest form of virtue is the product of personal love for God the Father, impersonal love for all mankind, and the interrelated operation of both. God's love shines forth more when we are suffering than any other time of our lives.

3. There is fellowship with the Holy spirit.

John 14:26 - "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you. The H.S. helps us by bringing into mind the relevant doctrines we know in order to apply them to our situation.

4. Being merciful and compassionate is a part of Joy or Happiness. In the midst of our suffering, our Lord knows what we are going through and offers us peace beyond understanding when we rely on Him.

5. Bringing your Joy to completion is thinking on the other side of Hope. **What does that mean?**

It is the integrity of personal love for God the Father and impersonal love for all mankind. It means when we love God so much, we have the capacity to love each other as well.

6. Your one objective is maximum glorification of God.

Gal 5:22-23 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23) gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

The fruit of the Spirit includes nine attributes of a godly life that the Holy Spirit works to develop in the lives of those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

Paul refers to the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit as "acts of the flesh" (Gal. 5:19), or "works of the flesh." Paul's purpose in writing Galatians 5 is to encourage his readers that those who "belong to Christ" (verse 24) are no longer slaves to their sin nature.

Gal. 5:24 - Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

7. Joy is a system of thinking doctrine and is accompanied with enthusiasm for that doctrine. Joy is thinking not emoting. Joy is not an emotion.

8. Joy is good thinking resulting in good emotional response to that thinking. Joy is doctrine circulating in the stream of our conscience.

It is thinking with divine viewpoint.

9. Joy has a response which includes animation in the soul, enthusiasm, exultation and optimism.

10. Joy must be defined by cognition.

Cognition - relating to the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning, as contrasted with emotional and volitional processes.

From this cognition we have a response. Emotion is not joy but is the response to it.

11. Joy is inner liveliness caused from the circulation of doctrine in the soul.

If there is no doctrine, there is no joy.

12. Joy is related to Christian fellowship.

1 John 1:3-4 - what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed, our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4) These things we write, so that **our joy** may be made complete.

Christian fellowship thrives when believers metabolize doctrine through the instruction of the Holy Spirit.

This is how our joy is brought to completion.

13. Joy begins in spiritual childhood but is enhanced and reaches its operational function with spiritual maturity.

14. Joy is both sharing the happiness of God and the response and excitement related to the pleasure and exultation of possessing an eternal and temporal relationship with God. Sharing the happiness of God brings our joy to completion.

15. Joy is the application of virtue - (behavior showing high moral standards) and values to complete occupation with Christ and have a rapport with God.

Occupation with Christ - is a mental attitude by which a Christian believer views all things in life with the Lord Jesus Christ in mind. (Love toward Christ)

James 1:2-3 - "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds."

3) knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. (Suffering for blessing)

The word "Consider" in the Greek is: ἡγήσομαι, "Hegeomai." (V.AMM) It is an Aorist Middle Imperative.

This is a commandment!

There are 3 explanations here of Joy.

1. To think - means the reasoning of the conscience mind, the capability of reasoning, remembering, decision making, and application.
2. To consider - means to think carefully in making decisions. Joy is the process of thinking in making decisions. Joy is making a decision based on thinking.
3. To regard - means to concentrate, to value, to honor, to revere; therefore, to think in terms of high esteem, to evaluate the facts is joy. This is an imperative mood, in which God makes a direct positive demand of the volition of the believer involved in suffering for blessing.

This verse applies only to the adult stage of the spiritual life. **You are commanded to face deserved suffering,**

undeserved suffering for testing or persecution suffering for Joy and blessing.

Psa. 30:5b - For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, but a shout of joy comes in the morning.

Even if your suffering is deserved and God is exercising His discipline, He is merciful to those believers who acknowledge their sin to Him.

What's the difference between joy and happiness?

by CompassioninJesus'name.org.

Joy is in the heart. Happiness is on the face.

Joy is of the soul. Happiness is of the moment.

Joy transcends. Happiness reacts.

Joy embraces peace and contentment, waiting to be discovered.

Joy runs deep in the soul and overflows.

Joy is a practical behavior. It is deliberate and intentional. Happiness is an emotion.

Joy is profound and scriptural. "Don't worry, rejoice."

Happiness makes you feel better. "Don't worry, be happy."

Joy is an inner feeling. Happiness is an outward expression.

Joy endures hardship and trials and connects with meaning and purpose, while happiness doesn't thrive here.

A person pursues happiness but chooses Joy, practices Joy, knows Joy and lives Joy.

Happiness doesn't bring Joy and Joy isn't the byproduct of Happiness. Joy is something grander than Happiness.

Joy is a fruit of the spirit. Happiness isn't a fruit of the spirit. When we find Joy, it is infused with comfort and wrapped in Peace. Joy is an attitude of the soul and spirit, synonymous with following Christ Jesus and pursuing a Christian life.

It's possible to know Joy or feel Joy, despite grief or uncertainty. Joy doesn't need a smile to exist.

Although Joy does feel better with a happy smile, Joy can share space with other emotions too - sadness, fear,

anger...even unhappiness. Happiness can't coexist with these emotions as it is the antithesis of them.

Happiness isn't present in darkness and difficulty.

It cannot be present when it's antithesis rules.

Once discovered, Joy undergirds our spirits and brings to life peace and contentment, even in the face of unhappiness.

Joy is available every moment for believers. Happiness is temporary and is mostly just passing through.

While happiness feels good and seems worthy of our attention, it is also very fickle. It can be here for weeks on end and then suddenly gone, based on circumstances, while true Joy is constant and lives in the soul and is not based on circumstances.

Joy requires the utmost surrender and, like love, is a choice to be made.

Joy is not great happiness or even extreme happiness. It's not elation, jubilation or exhilaration, however, these are emotions that may be present with Joy.

In its truest expression, Joy transforms difficult times into blessings and turns heartache into gratitude to God.

Joy brings meaning to life. Joy can overcome anything in this world if it is allowed. If it is chosen. In choosing Joy, there is Hope. With Joy, hardship offers growth and opportunity. With Joy, self-esteem and self-respect are indestructible.

Whatever is in the cup that God is offering to me,
Whether it be pain and sorrow and suffering and grief
Along with the many more joys, I'm willing to take it
because I trust Him.

Here's some verses to remember:

Psalm 30:11 - "You turned my mourning into dancing; you removed my Sackcloth and clothed me with Joy."

(A psalm of David-Thanksgiving for deliverance from death)

Psalm 59:16 - But as for me, I shall sing of Your strength; Yes, I shall joyfully sing of Your lovingkindness in the morning, for You have been my stronghold and a refuge in the day of my distress.

(A Prayer for Deliverance from David's Enemies)

John 16:21 - "Whenever a woman is in labor, she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. (A foretelling of Jesus' death and resurrection)

Romans 15:13 - Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

(Self-denial on Behalf of Others)

We can have Joy through our suffering and after.

Joy is a choice that points to our eternal future with Christ, here on earth and in eternity with Him.

I discover overwhelming joy when I put God first in my life; His gift of joy gives me a true happiness that is not dependent on my circumstances.