

THE EXAMINER

Published by the Winter Park church of Christ
Meeting at: 2122 Market Street; Wilmington NC 28403
www.winterparkcocnc.com



Vol. 2, No. 35

Edited by John Cripps

December 7th, 2014

“But the Fruit Of The Spirit isJoy” - Galatians 5:22-23 - by Steven F. Deaton

Each Christian should have a life filled with joy. However, it is not something that is automatic. Rather, effort must be put forth to bring about joy. The Holy Spirit revealed joy, part of the fruit of the Spirit, comes about as the result of a "walk in the Spirit" (**Galatians 5:16, 22**).

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words defines joy (chara) as "joy, delight." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament says it is "joy, gladness." These are somewhat vague definitions. And, sadly, joy has been redefined by men. Many today believe that joy in the life of a disciple of Christ involves nothing more than a superficial feeling of giddiness. They believe it derives from a "church" baseball game, a "fellowship" dinner, or a "religious" retreat. That is, many have a shallow view of what joy in the Lord truly is. The Spirit said, "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (**Romans 14:17**). Joy is deeper than what men would lead you to

believe. It is more concrete than the fleeting, fleshly things of this world. Joy in the Holy Spirit is, as He defined it, walking in the Spirit. To walk in the Spirit is to abide by the revelation of the Spirit (**Romans 8:1, 2**).

Joy Is:

Learning & Knowing Truth

Jesus said, "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (**Matthew 13:44**). Discovering the truth ought to be a great joy to one and all. When a man burdened with sin and its guilt comes to the realization that this can all be removed, what joy it brings to his soul (cf. **Acts 8:36-39; 13:48**). He is willing to trade all he has for the precious jewel of the gospel. He is willing to give up his old walk, to walk in the Spirit.

This gladness of learning and knowing the truth should never fade. John, in addressing Christians, said, "And these things we write to you that your joy may be full" (**1**

John 1:4). Remember also, John's first epistle was written in the context of knowing soul-saving truth as distinguished from soul-damning error. John wrote against the anti-christ, informing his readers that God had come in the flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. Whenever we learn truth which helps us to escape or avoid error, we should be filled with great joy.

Salvation & Repentance

Luke recorded, "So being sent on their way by the church, they [Paul and Barnabas] passed through Phoenicia and Samaria, describing the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren" (**Acts 15:3**). There are those who have a negative attitude toward the salvation of others. The Jews were hostile toward the gospel going out to the Gentiles as Gentiles. No doubt, this same attitude exists in some quarters today and will cause some to lose their own soul. Rather than this, we are to rejoice in the salvation of one-and-all.

Further, when one who has been saved turns back to the world, it is an occasion of great sadness, or ought to be. When that one again turns to the Lord, both men and angels are to rejoice (**Luke 15:7, 10**). Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Some disciples are unwilling to forgive one who has committed a "terrible" sin like adultery or drug use. The godly

attitude is to have joy over any and all who repent no matter what they have done.

In Suffering & Persecution

When experiencing the trials, tribulations, and temptations of life, most people are miserable. They complain about how awful their plight is and why they are so mistreated. In stark contrast to this, we read of those in the Bible who had great joy in the midst of suffering and persecution.

The Macedonians were poor, but they had gladness (**2 Corinthians 8:2**). The reason they could have joy is because their lives were not based upon worldly matters, but upon heavenly ones (cf. **Matthew 6:19-21; Colossians 3:1-4**). The text says they had given themselves to the Lord (**2 Corinthians 8:5**). This allowed for their joy and to give liberally out of poverty.

Paul was a hunted man. He did all within his power to spread the gospel of Christ — the power of God unto salvation (**Romans 1:16**). Yet, there were men who hated him for this. So, they sought to kill him. This would be a stressful and depressing time for most men, but Paul could say, "I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation" (**2 Corinthians 7:4**). This is the same attitude we should all have.

Whether physical, financial, or spiritual in nature, our trials are not to get the best of us; they will not if we walk in the Spirit. We need to

understand that there are times when the Lord chastens those whom He loves (**Hebrews 12:5-8**). "Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (**Hebrews 12:11**). Just as Jesus looked beyond the cross, we need to look beyond our present trials and temptations to the great joy ahead (**Hebrews 12:2; cf. 1 Peter 1:6-9**). Remember, each trial we go through only makes us stronger and prepares us for greater service in the kingdom. Therefore, with James, let us say, "My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials" (**James 1:2**).

Conclusion

When we walk in the Spirit, we will have the fruit of the Spirit, including joy. This joy is derived from a love for the Lord, His truth, His kingdom, and the souls of men. It does not just happen, but is the result of a concerted effort to follow the precepts of God. Again, this joy will not be attached to the ever changing standards of men, and therefore fleeting, but it is anchored to the eternal truth and promises of our Savior. Do you walk in the Spirit and have His fruit? The presence or lack of joy in your life is one indicator.

The Joy of Being a Christian — by Tarry L. Cluff

The constitution of the United

States was framed and adopted in 1787. In it is the right of every man for the pursuit of happiness. The quest to obtain happiness has led men in many different directions without achieving that goal.

Solomon in the book of **Ecclesiastes, chapter two**, tells of his quest to find the secret of "what it was good for the sons of men that they should do under heaven all the days of their life" (**Verse 2**). Solomon had everything: he tells of his fame and fortune in **Ecclesiastes 2:10** "and whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them . . ." Wouldn't you think if a man could have anything his eyes desired he would be happy? Not so, look at **verse 11**, "then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labor that I had labored to do: and, behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind." At the end of the book, Solomon tells us the secret to a true and lasting happiness. **Ecclesiastes 12:13**: "This is the end of the matter all hath been heard: Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man." Solomon realized, that the God who created man knows best what will and will not make man happy.

Many known men of our time have tried various things in life only to find happiness was not there. Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote: "I wish I had never been born." Jay Gould, an American millionaire, with all

his money said when he was dying: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth." Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure, if anyone did. He wrote; "The worm, the canker, and the grief are mine alone." Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day, having done so, he said in tears: "There are no more worlds to conquer." Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of position and fame. He wrote: "youth is a mistake; manhood, a struggle; and old age a regret." The answer to happiness is not found in unbelief, nor money, nor pleasure, nor military glory, or in position and fame.

Where, Then, is Happiness Found?

The answer is simple; in Christ alone. Jesus said to his Apostles; "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you" (**John 16:22**).

Paul wrote the Christians in **Philippians 4:4** and said, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say Rejoice." Over 600 times in the Bible the words: Joy, Happiness, Bless, etc. are found. The Bible even speaks of the joy in suffering as a Christian. **Colossians 1:11**, ". . . unto all patience and longsuffering with joy;" **James 1:2**, "count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into manifold temptation." **1 Peter 4:16**, "But if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name."

Everyone can find happiness by

obeying Jesus. We can have the joy that is found in being a Christian. But, how do we become a Christian?

How to Become a Christian

God did not forget to tell us, nor did he leave it up to our own judgment as to how we become a Christian. The Bible is plain on the subject. In the Book of Acts we have examples of conversions. The Jews on the day of Pentecost were told to believe Jesus is Lord and Christ, and to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:36-38**). Those that were baptized (**verse 41**) were added to the church (**verse 47**).

In every case of conversion the steps were the same: faith in Jesus, repentance of sins, and baptism for the remission of sins. Any person who has not taken these simple steps for the reasons that the Bible gives is not a Christian.

Friends, do not fool yourself into thinking you are a Christian when you have not obeyed the Lord's commands. Jesus said only those who do the will of God will be saved (**Matthew 7:21; Mark 16:16**). **Via --- Truth Magazine XX: 42, p. 668 October 21, 1976**

