



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study: **THE POWER OF A JOYFUL LIFE**
Matthew 5:12; Luke 6:22,23; 1 Peter 4:13,14

Many things we do not understand happen to us in life. Negative things that happen to us usually bring along with them sorrow, sadness, grief and loss of joy. Christ, in this message, teaches us not only how to approach life but also what we are to do when negative things happen to us. This is because He knows the constitution of man: that the manifestation of negative emotions – grief, sadness, sorrow, worry, anxiety, fear, anger, hatred, malice – will break down man's system. But when positive emotions of joy, gladness and happiness are vent, they will build it up.

There is power in joyfulness. It is a mental diet that helps our emotions and strengthens the mind. A negative, depressive attitude destroys while a joyful attitude renews life. Christ then prescribes that the right attitude during persecution is to **"rejoice, and be exceeding glad"** because the purpose of the enemy is to, with the persecution, make us sink low and be so unhappy, dejected, discouraged, depressed, and consequently be sick. But Jesus wants us to be joyful and healthy. We are neither to sit down in discouragement and mourn nor beat a retreat because we suffer persecution; we are to **"rejoice ...and leap for joy"**. In anything that happens, there is always a positive side to it.

Joy strengthens our minds. A strong mind builds a strong body; a peaceful mind builds a calm body. Joy assists our faith, hope and love. A person of negative disposition, a moody person is capable of spreading sorrow around him. Sorrow of heart depresses, and causes despair and disease (Nehemiah 2:2). If the heart is sorrowful, the countenance will be sad and it brings weakness to the body. It is the inner man that gives the body either strength or weakness. Sadness or depression is the negative effect of the mind on the body. It is an internal problem that is oozing out of sad people. The internal condition then depreciates, destroys and makes a person to have disease on the external body. But perpetual joy in our spirits and souls, as Christians, will keep us ahead of our persecutors and on top of our entire problem in the path of progress and in the enjoyment of good health, strength and power.

THE STRENGTHENING POWER OF JOY

Matthew 5:12; Nehemiah 8:10; Psalms 51:8; 28:7,8; 35:9,10; Genesis 45:26-28; Proverbs 25:25; Acts 16:19-26.

Rejoice because joy has a way of strengthening you. When you are joyful internally, it gives you strength. The discouragement, depression and grief we suffer as a result of bad news we hear do not solve our problems. Rather, they compound them. They can cut short a bright prospect or make one to abandon a promising project. As Christians, we are to sit down, pray, look at the promises of God concerning those problems. Then develop your strategy on how to solve the problems. Some don't eat because of problem. Don't sell off your heritage and the Lord will see you through. The persecution or problem of today will not continue forever; a bright day is coming. That you have a problem that looks more than you can comprehend is no reason to be dejected. You have a God that is greater than the enemy. The things that make you sad do not take responsibility for making you sad by allowing you to draw your own conclusion; you are actually responsible for your sadness. Depression distorts mental faculty and hinders a free flow of thought. When once there is problem, it becomes difficult for some people to think things through before taking decisions or drawing conclusions. When you believe a lie, it brings depression to you, and like Jacob, you cannot believe truth when it eventually comes out. That is what grief, sadness and sorrow do to us.

The strength comes from the inside. Just as nursing mothers don't generally fall sick because of joy, so it is with all men. So long as there is joy, the weakness will disappear. Even if she had been sickly, as soon as she gives birth, because of joy, she becomes healthy and strong. Joy brings health.

THE SPIRITUAL PILL IN JOY

Matthew 5:12; Proverbs 17:22; Matthew 6:25-31; Proverbs 14:30;15:13,30; 17:22; Isaiah 66:14; Proverbs 13:12.

"A merry heart doeth good like a medicine". Knowing this, the Lord discouraged His audience against worry and anxiety about food, drink and clothing. He knows that worry and anxiety will tear down the system. Worry and anxiety do not solve any problem; if anything at all, they have a way of blocking our mind and making us fall sick, faulty in our thinking. Just as a healthy heart makes blood circulation in the system easy and the body healthy so the joyful mind the body. Though you may not be able to prevent hearing negative information, resolve to not allow any of them to unnecessarily disturb you. If hearing negative information has brought you sickness, the easier way back to health and vitality is to cease from hearing that kind of information. Having recovered, you are to use the shield of faith to protect yourself from bad news that weakens and breaks the heart and makes the body sick. Envy and jealousy of what others have attained are destructive to the human body. Praise God for those who have achieved something; do not envy them. Know that each person has his own calling and if he achieves something, it is not for you to be

jealous. If he has what you do not have, you don't need what he has because you don't do his work; you have what you need. There is no room for envy. God has given you the talent and the gift for your calling and that should give you joy.

If you are happy on the inside, it gives you a cheerful countenance. As believers, there is need for proper information management. If you have information that belittles, destroys the self-esteem and the image of others, keep it. This same principle applies to married couples. Make a commitment to tell your spouse good things that boost morale and sustain good health since "...**a good report maketh the bones fat**" (Proverbs 15:30).

When you are expecting something and there is delay, still make a commitment to live a happy life. God has a reason for this delay. Sarah, Hannah and Elizabeth had delay in childbirth. But God eventually gave them special children (Isaac, Samuel and John the Baptist) that were notable in their lifetime.

THE STEADY PROGRESS OF THE JOYFUL

Matthew 5:12; Acts 5:40-42; 13:50-52; 14:1-3; Psalm 32:11; Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16; 2 Corinthians 7:4.

As Christians, the ill-treatment we suffer from other people on account of our faith is not what kills our joy. It is our negative interpretation of their actions. No one is capable of robbing another of his joy. Then, we must interpret everything that happens to us with a positive attitude that maintains joy. As such, do not feel guilty for what other people do. The early disciples suffered beating, disgrace, expulsion and imprisonment. But, rather than concede guilt or ascribe their ordeal to their own failure, "**the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost**" (Acts 13:52). And they went on preaching the gospel. The secret is right interpretation of the actions of their persecutors: that they could do no less to them than they did to Christ. They crucified Christ. Thus, they put the responsibility on the persecutors – they did not put the blame on themselves. They rejoiced and continued to preach the gospel despite their trial for doing the will of God. Believers must not take the blame for negative actions of others that affect them because of the gospel.

As a Christian, persecution and trial of faith should not blur your vision of fulfilling the Great Commission or living a fulfilled Christian life. Do not allow the reactions of people to control and cancel the vision you have. Rather, rejoice during persecution, maintain the heavenly vision and make progress in the service of God. "**Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart**" (Psalm 32:11). Joy is the scriptural lifestyle that leads to steady progress and fulfilment. During trials, don't allow negative thoughts to becloud your mind and rob you of your joy. Learn to cultivate the attitude of joy and "**Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice**" (Philippians 4:4). It will strengthen your bones, make you to flourish and be a healthy Christian.

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