

# The Believers Joy

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- [ 0 : 00 ] I shall sing from Psalm 96 and we're going to sing from verse 8 to the end of the psalm.
- Psalm 96 from verse 8. Give ye the glory to the Lord that to his name is due. Come ye into his courts and bring an offering with you.
- In beauty of his holiness, so do the Lord adore. Likewise, let all the earth throughout tremble his face before. Among the heathens say, God reigns.
- The world shall steadfastly be fixed from moving. He shall judge the people righteously. Let heavens be glad before the Lord and let the earth rejoice.
- Let seas and all that is therein cry out and make a noise. Let fields rejoice and everything that springeth off the earth. Then woods and every tree shall sing with gladness and with mirth.
- [ 1 : 08 ] Before the Lord, because he comes to judge the earth comes he. He'll judge the world with righteousnesses. The people faithfully.
- We can sing these verses, Psalm 96, from verse 8 to the end. Give ye the glory to the Lord that to his name is due.
- Give ye the glory to the Lord that to his name is due.
- Come ye into his courts and bring an offering with you.
- In beauty of his holiness, O to the Lord adore.
- [ 2 : 18 ] Likewise, let all the earth throughout tremble his face before.
- The world shall steadfastly be fixed from moving.
- Let people righteously. Let hands be glad before the Lord and let the earth rejoice.
- Let seas and all that is therein cry out and make a noise.
- Let fields rejoice and everything that singeth off the earth.
- [ 4 : 03 ] Then words and every tree shall sing with gladness and with mirth.
- Before the Lord, because he comes to judge the earth comes he.
- He'll judge the world with righteousness. Let the people faithfully.
- We're going to turn now to the passage that we were reading together in the New Testament script.
- Just the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians chapter 7. Great is my boldness of Paul to the Lord.
- [ 5 : 19 ] Great is my boldness of speech toward you. Great is my glorying of you. I am filled with comfort.
- I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulations. Particularly these words. I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.
- What kind of Christian are you if you are indeed a Christian? Are you a happy Christian? Are you a happy Christian? Is that the same as a joyful Christian?

Is there a difference between what we call happiness and joyfulness?

If we read much of what the Apostle Paul has to say, we may have some kind of opinion with regard to the kind of person that he was.

[ 6 : 34 ] Maybe you are different to the way I think. You can't but not have some kind of image in your mind as to the kind of person that Paul was.

What was he like? I am not talking about physically. I am not talking about physically. Although some people would want to have a portrait of the Apostle in their mind derived from Scripture.

And you see people trying to think of what he was like physically. And they will take a few passages that would suggest something of his physical frame.

But we are talking more about what was he like as a person. Is it important? Is it important to you? Is it important to me to know something about the kind of person Paul was?

What was he like psychologically? What was he like as somebody that you came into contact with within the community?

[ 7 : 55 ] Where he sometimes spent time, sometimes longer periods than others. He would spend time and people would get to know him.

He would work alongside them. He would speak to them face to face. He would preach to them. And inevitably they would have some kind of idea of what kind of person he was.

Maybe you think that Paul was somebody who was severe. Somebody who was stern. Somebody who was stern. Somebody if you saw him coming towards you would avoid.

You wouldn't want a face to face confrontation with him. And we've known Christians like that certainly when I was younger.

There were certain Christians and you were afraid of them. Because you would be quite certain that they would speak to you directly.

[ 9 : 00 ] And very pointedly. Especially wanting to confront you with where you were spiritually.

Questions that you did not want to answer if they were asked of you. It may be that some people thought of Paul like that.

That he was somebody that they would want to walk on the other side of the road from. Perhaps you think that Paul would not be somebody you would want in your company.

You would not want him to be in your fellowship. After a church service. It would be good to have him there for theological discussion.

But maybe he would cramp your style. Maybe he would make you suppress any thoughts that you had. Not to speak too openly in his company.

[ 10 : 03 ] Well maybe these thoughts have never entered your mind. There are certain things that Paul has said. That are recorded for us.

That allow us to understand that whatever he was. He was God's man. He was somebody who was earnest. Somebody who was industrious.

Somebody who was pursuing a calling. I determined he said not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.

A grim determination you would say. To pursue one end and one end only. To let people know about Christ.

Let people know about their need of Christ. Let people know about their need of salvation. And whatever it took to bring that truth before them.

[ 11 : 03 ] That was what he was in the world to do. But does that mean that our image of the apostle thinks of him as somebody who was miserable?

Somebody who was totally lacking in any notion as we would have it of pleasure or joy. That he was so serious that you couldn't really engage with him without feeling oppressed. Well I think that's a completely wrong picture of what Paul was like. But I want to, before I even say anything more, I want to begin with a disclaimer. That is that when we are wanting to talk tonight about the joyfulness that the Christian believer should possess.

[ 12 : 22 ] The joyfulness that should mark them out as believers. Which I believe marked Paul out as a believer. That we should understand that the joy of which this verse and all other verses that speak of the believer's joy.

And the believer's joy and the believer's joy and the believer's happiness is quite different to anything that you would find called by that name in the world.

That it is quite different to anything of that sort that may have that name and may be given that name by those who are in the world.

There are many tonight in the world in which we live in. And they are having a great time. They are enjoying themselves. They would say that they are rejoicing in whatever it is that they have gathered together to celebrate.

Maybe a party, maybe a birthday party, maybe a celebration of some description. And they are rejoicing in whatever it is that the only kind of rejoicing that you can experience.

[ 13 : 41 ] But that is quite different to the rejoicing that the believer enjoys or experiences.

It is quite possible that we can have people in the world, and I suppose we have to say this as well, that temperamentally they are almost always in the grip of a downcast spirit.

That's what they are by nature. You would think that by nature they are always on a downer. They are always in the depths as it were.

It is their nature. Then there are others and they would be more on the crest. In the grip of some euphoria or something akin to that.

That's possible. That's something that is possibly temperamental, possibly psychological. But it is quite different to what we can explore this evening.

[ 15 : 00 ] A person who is a Christian can be in the grip of melancholy or something akin to that. And yet at the same time they may have this privileged position of rejoicing in the Lord.

A person who is in the world and of the world and who is always on the crest of a wave can possibly know nothing of the true joy of which the word of God speaks.

Which alone belongs to those who have come to discover who the Lord Jesus Christ is. Now I want us to understand this because sometimes there is more than a hint of suspicion that a happy Christian, a joyful Christian is an anomaly.

A joyful Christian is someone that is out of kilter. That he is somebody who does not truly understand what sin is or the dire nature of the fallenness of this world.

And the awful reality of eternity for many who will enter into it as a lost soul. That any Christian who lives in the world cannot in the shadow of that be in any way, shape or form able to rejoice.

[ 16 : 45 ] Now people may believe that. People may think that that is the proper position for a believer.

But I am afraid what they are saying or believing there is not at odds with what the Christian church has taught and what the Bible has informed the teaching of the church concerning.

Some of you will know the writings of William Gernal. It is a vast tome that bears his name, the Christian in complete armor.

But he has also written other books and some of his theology is left to us. And he says very clearly that it is to quote himself that sad sins are a perfect example of an oxymoron.

Sad sins are a perfect example of an oxymoron. Now what does he mean by that? An oxymoron is a statement that contains two apparently contradictory positions.

[ 18 : 15 ] To be a saint and to be a sad cannot exist in the same thought process, in the same word, in the same sentence.

What he would argue and what he did argue was if you are a Christian, if you are a believer, if you have committed your soul to Jesus Christ, you have no reason to be sad.

Now very often our theology is based on our experience, rightly or wrongly. And we would say that Gernal has gone too far because what he is saying is illogical.

Because our experience tells us that we are sad too often and that we have a depressed mind often and that we have reason to be grimly downcast.

But that is not what the apostle Paul presents to us as far as he is concerned. Even when you look at the writings of the apostle, and it is quite, it is worth your while doing this.

[ 19 : 33 ] For yourself, looking at how often he says concerning himself that he is rejoicing in the Lord and that he is enjoying great things under the hand of God.

Just for example, you look at this passage here, this book, this epistle, the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

And he describes to us a situation which you could not envisage creating anything other than distress and grim feelings of sorrow in his heart.

He says in the beginning, very beginning of the epistle, for as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.

And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer.

[ 20 : 50 ] Or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye also be of the consolation.

For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raises the dead, who delivered us from so great a death, and does deliver us in whom we trust, that he will deliver us yet.

Yea, also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

Now, you read these words, and there's nothing in these words that would suggest to you anything other than a thoroughly miserable existence.

[ 22 : 06 ] He is suffering, he is grieved in his spirit, he is witnessing the sorrows of the church for the persecution that they have to endure, and much more besides.

But where does he go with that? Well, he goes here. He says, For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you, Lord.

For we write none of other things unto you than what ye read or acknowledge, and I trust you shall acknowledge even to the end. And so on.

How can Paul possibly use this word, our rejoicing is this? You'll see, it can't mean what I understand rejoicing to mean.

In the midst of all that he is saying, he cannot possibly speak of rejoicing when all this is true of it. And if you continue into the next chapter, the same thing is true again, where you find him speak about the experiences that bring him immense joy.

[ 23 : 36 ] And on the face of it, the experiences themselves would seem to contradict that. The relationship that he has with the church in Corinth was a very fragile one.

And you can see from the passage that we read that there had been history between them, and that he had to write to them a very sharp letter. But he rejoiced because of the outcome of that, that he saw for himself and heard for himself of their repentance for the reason for the letter.

Now, the thing that we need to understand is sometimes, while it may appear on the surface that joy or the rejoicing that belongs to the Lord's people cannot possibly exist in the atmosphere in which that joy is made to exist.

The very truth is that it does.

It is bearable. It is bearable. And it puts alongside it through the passion of the Lord Jesus Christ and the ministry of the Spirit that he has given to his church.

[ 25 : 21 ] A joy that exceeds it. A joy that is more than any grim misery that they have to endure.

I attended a funeral recently and I was reminded forcibly of that. In fact, what I was reminded of was the person who passed away had told me his testimony many years ago.

And he had told many others his testimony. And his testimony was of somebody who came out of darkness into the marvelous light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But he did so in the most marvelous circumstances when you would expect that person to be overwhelmed with grief.

And I'm not saying that grief was not present. But the joy that he experienced in the Lord Jesus Christ exceeded the grief and made the grief almost diminish into nothing.

[ 26 : 28 ] Because he was filled full of joy that came from knowing the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior for the first time.

And a new convert often experiences that. A new convert experiences the greatest of joys that they did not believe possible.

I was trying to think of my own personal experience. And I do remember going through a period at the very beginning of my Christian journey where it was as if you were riding on a crest of a wave.

Even though there were things going on around you and there were other things that you became aware of. The greatest influence, the greatest effect that you had in your experience.

Through this newly discovered relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It made all these things go into the background.

[ 27 : 45 ] And it made the significance of the atoning work of Jesus Christ all important.

You know when Paul wrote it to the Roman church. She says, we joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ whom we have now received the atonement.

It's a very simple sentence. But the rejoicing that he experiences is a rejoicing that is the result of the atoning work of Jesus Christ.

And an appreciation of it, an enlightening of his mind as to the significance of it. I know that one of the commentators I said that always you will find the joy of the believer walking in tandem as it were with the love that the believer has for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Maybe that's something you can ask yourself. Is that true? Is the love that you have for the Lord Jesus Christ always accompanied with joy or vice versa?

[ 29 : 05 ] We know that when Philip encountered the Ethiopian eunuch and he expounded the gospel to him by explaining to him the words that this man was reading from the Old Testament.

We know that the effect of that exposition was that the man went away rejoicing. He went away rejoicing. Whatever else he had, he went away converted.

Whatever else he experienced, he experienced the joy of the Lord. Now perhaps you might respond to this with scripture and you would say, Well a Christian is more than just somebody who is a happy jappy.

Because the scripture also tells you that the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ has got an awareness of sin that was never before in his experience until their encounter with Christ.

And that there are many verses of scripture that you can go to and you're told, not only of the fact of your sin, but the outcome of your sin in your own experience.

[ 30 : 22 ] That it is something that frustrates your relationship with Christ. That sometimes comes between you and Christ. Sometimes there's passages of scripture such as, you are counseled to weep with those who weep.

You are counseled to be often in the house of mourning. So that, how can it possibly be the case that you have these simultaneous experiences of grief and sorrow, and at the same time with the rejoicing that we're speaking of here, remaining constant.

We cannot be then affected by our sin, surely. And if that sin is a heartfelt sin, then it grieves us.

But you must also bear in mind that the place where you discover your sin is also the place where the Holy Spirit resides. And the Holy Spirit resides in the heart of every believer.

And where the Holy Spirit is present, then the joy of the Lord is not far from your attention. If you remember, the Apostle John, in his epistles, he writes to the church, he writes to the believing people of God, in order that their joy might be full.

[ 31 : 48 ] The word that he uses is not just that they would have periodic periods of cheerfulness or happiness, but that their joy would be the ultimate joy of somebody who knows the power of God in saving sinners through Christ Jesus.

He is writing his epistle in order that that might be the case. You know the words of Peter the Apostle. Peter preaches the gospel to those who are greatly affected by their own circumstances, but at the same time, he says to them this, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found, and to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom, having not seen, you love, in whom, though now you see him not yet believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Now that is the believer's joy he's talking about, the rejoicing there. It is not separating them from the reasons that they have for encountering and enduring and overcoming the things that are grievous to them, but their joy sustains them and enables them to anticipate a greater still joy.

Again and again we are reminded that the joy of the believer is never cancelled out by contrary experiences. And the reason for that I would argue is because of the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Let me quote to you the words of Derek Prime. He says, The joy that is the fruit of the Spirit is not the result of agreeable circumstances, which is what, humanly speaking, you would imagine.

[ 34 : 00 ] It is not the result of the joy of the Holy Spirit. It is not the result of agreeable circumstances, but an inward joy springing up within us like a living fountain, irrespective of what our circumstances are or difficulties may be.

Surely it would be wrong of the apostle to insist, as he does, that the believer rejoice, that the believer rejoice in the Lord always, he says.

Rejoice, I say. Rejoice again, I say. Why is he pressing that upon us? Why is he insisting that that would be the case?

Because that is the default position of the believer. It is the default position of the believer, because the joy of the Lord is our strength.

The joy of the Lord is what he himself has promised, and what he himself has provided. Look again at what the scripture says.

[ 35 : 05 ] He was speaking to the disciples. The Lord Jesus was preparing them for the time when he would have to take, go away from this world, when he would have to go to the cross.

These things I have spoken to you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

There's something worth thinking about. He is talking about his joy, but his joy in order that their joy might be full.

And that is, I think, and that is, I think, significant. Looking at the congregation in Corinth might, you might have thought that Paul would have cause for concern, but literally what he is saying in this passage, where these words are found.

I more than abound in joy. My joy is overflowing. But even that, Paul understands, as he frequently alludes to, that whatever joy that he has in this world, however much it overflows, it is but a shadow of what awaits.

[ 36 : 29 ] Do you think heaven is going to be a place without joy? Do you? Well, I don't.

I think it is a place where your joy will be overflowing. And the reason for your overflowing joy will be there before you.

And every child of God, who by faith have placed their trust in Christ, cannot but believe that Christ means them to have a foretaste of that joy.

So that it is a constant. Maybe not in evidence to the degree that we would imagine it to be, but it always reappears, even when we think that it will never appear again.

It will always come to the fore because he is someone who has promised never to leave or forsake his own. And what he has promised, he will never break.

[ 37 : 32 ] Well, may God give you some food for thought, even in thinking about these things. I think one of the commentators was terribly concerned that there are those in the world, and they do have a tendency to have more heavy hearts because of circumstances, because of circumstances, and they think themselves to be lacking because of that's not what I'm saying, and that's not what I'm encouraging.

But that their joy, that there is no reason for any believer to feel embarrassed whenever their heart is filled to or flowing with a sense of joy that Christ means them to have.

Well, may he bless to us these thoughts that is praying. O Lord, we give thanks that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repented.

We often reflect on what these words mean. We know that your people have had joy in their hearts, and that while they live in this world, they may be overwhelmed by many things that may seem to them to steal away that joy.

But the joy that they possess, as your people, cannot be taken from them because the one who has purchased it for them means them to possess it.

[ 39 : 10 ] And if not in full in this life, surely the life to come. Bless us in his name, we pray. Forgive us every sin. Amen. We're going to conclude our service singing some verses in garble from Psalm 63.

Psalm 63 at verse 5. Psalm 63.

Psalm 63.

Psalm 64.

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

[ 42 : 08 ] CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS ...

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O Mache, our Nessayet, Amen.