

# The believers Joy in the Lord and His Salvation

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Date: 03 October 2024

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[ 0 : 00 ] We shall sing from Psalm 63, from the beginning to verse 8. My lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live. Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall filled be. Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee.

When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight. And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night, in shadow of thy wings I'll joy. For thou mine help hast been. My soul thee follows hard, and me thy right hand doth sustain.

And so on these verses, 1-2-8 of Psalm 63. Lord thee, my God, I laudely seek. My soul doth thirst for thee.

Lord thee, my God, I laudely seek. My soul doth thirst for thee.

Thy flesh shall send a dry past land, where in no waters be.

[ 1 : 53 ] But I thy power may behold, and brightness of thy face.

As I am seen thee here to hold, with then thy holy grace.

Since that it is thy love of life. My mercy, grace shall give.

I am thy name will lift my hands and bless thee.

My heart may be. My heart may be. If not with my heart, O one with light, my soul shall fill with me.

[ 3 : 19 ] And then shall I learn with joy and will be. Sing, Jesus, unto thee.

When I do thee upon my head, remember which delight.

How may I meditate. How may I meditate. How may I meditate. In waters of the night.

When shall I meditate. And shall go of thy way, in thy joy.

For thou my head, in my head, must be. My soul before you draw and be Thy right hand does the skin We can turn to the passage that we read, the book of Psalms, in Psalm 35.

[ 4 : 53 ] And we read verse 9. And my soul shall be joyful in the Lord, it shall rejoice in his salvation.

My soul shall be joyful in the Lord, it shall rejoice in his salvation. A Christian is a conundrum to many.

He is, or she is, they are sometimes conflicted, sometimes their experiences seem to be contradictory.

There are experiences when the expected emotion is grief and despondency.

And yet the emotion that is experienced is one of joy and happiness.

[ 6 : 07 ] Sometimes it is the opposite. And that is inexplicable, humanly speaking. And in a sense the psalmist is somebody who has these contradictions in his life.

And what he reports and what he recounts are emotions and feelings that he has that arise out of his own peculiar circumstances.

And we are so glad for the psalmist that he, under the guidance of the Spirit, is able to speak these truths arising out of these experiences.

They are peculiar to himself. They are uniquely his own. And yet they become the Lord's people's experiences.

The Old Testament saint would sing the words of the psalmist. And he would sing it with gusto and with appreciation.

[ 7 : 26 ] And with empathy and sympathy. And with a perfect understanding of the meaning of these words.

Because they so melded in with their own experience. And the New Testament saint is the same. No different.

And maybe we look back on the things that give rise to these emotions. And give rise to these thoughts. And perhaps they're so different to the kind of day that we live in.

And the kind of situations that arise out of this day. And yet at the heart of our experiences, under God's hand, under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit, we find that God has gone this way before us.

And he is with us in the way that we are on. And his eye has plotted out the future.

[ 8 : 38 ] Far more than we have any right to expect. This is a psalm, strangely enough, which is a psalm of thanksgiving.

And yet within this psalm of thanksgiving, there is a prayer for deliverance. Which seems unlikely. Why would a person want to thank the Lord heartily for God's goodness?

And at the same time, his cry to God is one for deliverance. There is an acknowledgement of sin.

But at the same time, there is a protestation of innocence. That he is free from the guilt of which he is accused.

This accuser level after many sins. And he finds himself able to argue against it.

[ 9 : 42 ] One of the commentators, Professor Alan Harmon, reckons that the psalm corresponds to the experiences that we find recorded in 2 Samuel.

1 Samuel, verse 24. And David there is saying, The Lord therefore be judge between me and thee, and see and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thy hand.

He is confronting an enemy in an unexpected way. He discovers the enmity that was hidden from sight.

But his desire expressed to God is that God would deliver him from that enemy. Some people are not comfortable with the imprecations of the Old Testament.

Where they call down the curse of God upon the head of their enemies. They are so sanctified in their own minds that they have no right to seek a judgment upon them.

[ 11 : 04 ] Because God, or the teachings of Christ, seem to suggest otherwise. But the imprecations there are aplenty, and Christ himself did not shy away from speaking the truth concerning the faith of the enemies of Christ that was God's saviour to sinners.

I want us to think of the joy of the believer as it is spoken of in this context. And it is a joy that belongs to every believer regardless of context.

If the context determined the existence of the joy there wouldn't be joy. The context of the psalmist is one where he is prey to the enemy.

Where he is constantly burdened by the friction that is created by enmity. And joy would be the last thing that you would actually expect to find mention of in the psalm.

But the psalmist says, My soul shall be joyful in the Lord. It shall rejoice in his salvation.

[ 12 : 20 ] But the joy that he is speaking of is the joy that is his in the Lord. That's the difference. The joy that is his in the Lord that allows him and enables him and insists upon it that regardless of circumstance that that joy remains and that joy continues as we shall see.

Our instinct tonight in the shadow of death a breach being made in the congregation a breach being made in the body of the church a breach being made in the neighbourhood in the community joy would be the last thing that we would want to speak about.

But we have a right to speak about it in all contexts in all situations because God is the God who has ordained it.

God has given us the grace of joy to sustain us at all times whether we are whether we are meant to or not.

whether we think that others would say about us it's not right it's not appropriate it's not the kind of thing that should be your experience at this time but it is.

[ 13 : 50 ] There are three things that we can say about these words. First of all the insistence that this joy belongs to the child of God whoever the child of God is they have a right to this joy that is God given and that is theirs in the Lord.

Secondly it is a joy that may experience frustration in expression if that's the right way of putting it it can at very least be disturbed there are occasions when the joy deep-seated as it may be may submerge it may suppose those of you who are interested in the sea you'll be used to working with boats and these boats when they're tied to the ground to the to the I don't know what the word is I'm not a seaman but when it's tied down to the to the bottom of the deep if the rope that ties it is short the boat will be will submerge and it will appear that it is that it is gone from sight forever but when the tide recedes and if the length of the rope is the way it should be then the boat will appear again maybe it's a poor illustration but the joy of the believer can be destroyed can be disturbed rather than destroyed and the joy that is disturbed can be restored that's what we need to find for ourselves when our peace when our joy is something that is affected by circumstance we need to remind ourselves that our circumstances are not what ordains our joy our circumstances are not what ensures but our joy prevails or lasts or is something that remains unbroken

I'm sure well it may not be true of you I don't know I'm sure it's true of many Christians when they first of all came to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ one of the experiences that was there there's a whole host of different experiences there's no doubt some went through a period of chastening under God's hands some came to awareness of sin some came to awareness of judgment and the awful reality of it and joy was not something that they were conscious of in any shape or form but I'm sure that it is very often the case that when a person experiences the reality of the power of the love of

Christ in redeeming us from our sin I'm sure that one byproduct of that is the joy that wells up in the heart of the believer it is something that that makes all other thoughts disappear and the power of the blood of Jesus Christ shed on the cross applied to the sins of the new believer is something that enables that person to think at that moment never again will my sin be a cause for my distress and it's sometimes almost euphoric and it's a driver to much of the experiences that you have at the initial process of coming to faith in

Jesus Christ it's more than happiness it's something much deeper because the source of that joy is not found in themselves the source is God the direction of it is God the person who experiences that experiences it at God's hand and it is directed to God and it comes from God and it comes from God or is directed to God and that's the way it is it's within ourselves no doubt but created in us by God and his spirit bringing his word to bear upon our hearts and upon our minds God God himself is both its object and its author and that's what you find in the scripture that's what you find in the

[ 19 : 40 ] New Testament and not it's a foolish thing to teach others based on your own experience because your own experience might be unique it might be just something that's true for you and nobody else it's always governed it should always be governed by what the scripture says and this what the scripture says about the believer's experience that it is the the root cause of the believer's joy is the activity of the Holy Spirit in the heart and mind of the believer if you remember how joyfulness marked out the people of God in the first instance and Christ himself when he was born into the world we are told about Christ that the response of the church to the birth of Christ was joy on earth peace on earth goodwill to all men rejoicing on the part of the angels and on the part of those who had the capacity to understand what God was doing

Paul himself the apostle who has many characteristics and many things that speak of his apostleship and his wisdom and his ability God given and God directed but he says to the church he says to the believer rejoice in the Lord he says always I say again rejoice it is a command homo insisted upon and the reason he says that is not because he wants them to go around and bound as if nothing in the world matters but because this he says is what marks out your Christianity it's not dependent on anything other than what God has created in you and it is created in you by him to sustain you when there are counter motions and counter emotions that are at work against you and the disciples needed to understand this so as not to be distracted and

Jesus forewarned them of that and looking at this again I was reminded of a story told by the late Alec John Macaulay he always told the same story he said I think it was his own experience but it was other people's as well when after coming to know the Lord he went and told some Christian that he had found the Lord and the response to that by the older Christian was my did you not get across did you not get across and the older Christians you see had this habit and some of them were very good at guarding and protecting the younger Christian so that they wouldn't be taken up with the euphoria of the initial experience so as not to be repaired by what was ahead of them some knew how to do that some didn't and sometimes they were very hard you so he went to speak to this older

Christian but before he could declare his heart to the Christian and the words of the Christian helped him immensely I hear he said you've been called up to the war I hear you've been called up to the war and there's wisdom and there's sensitivity and there's the appreciation of the person who needs to hear that and the joy didn't dissipate the joy didn't evaporate it just was lost from sight by the experience at the moment Jesus taught the disciples he said these things have I spoken to you that my joy might remain in you and that your joy might be fulfilled or might be full Jesus wanted his disciples to know what was ahead of them it's all very well being carried along on the crest of a wave not realising that that wave is going to be dashed on the rocks or dashed on the shore what then about your wave

Jesus said these things have I spoken to you that my joy might remain in you continue with you John 17 now come I to thee and these things I speak in the world that they might have my joy fulfilled and that was the purpose that was what he desired through his word that the world would come to possess the same joy that was his the rightful possession of his own people and his word through the hand of the spirit fulfills that in the life of the believer and you find that repeatedly different situations where there is an immeasurable rejoicing by God's grace with the word instrumental in bringing it about but our joy can be affected by some things and it's important for us to have this balance in our thinking to have this understanding that the reason for our joy is not taken away by our circumstances our circumstances may be what we focus our attention on whatever they may be in psalm 51 and verse 12 david's desire is a desire for restoration a desire to be reinstated with the knowledge of the experience of of god's presence and god's love and god's favour and he misses that and when he misses that he knows that it needs to be brought back by god himself david lost it because of sin and he could only have it restored by passing through the door of repentance his bones needed to be broken by god and by his spirit sometimes we lack our joy sensibly understand what I'm saying we lack it we're not aware of it we're not aware of our right to it we're not aware of its presence we're not aware of any reason for it because we have inflicted ourselves with the darkness that veils it and makes it obscure but we need with god's help to have us directed back to the reason for our joy sometimes people's temperament has a great deal to play in this rather some people are always euphoric but that doesn't mean they're more joyful in this sense some people are more downcast almost bringing on despair but it doesn't mean that their joy is not a genuine joy except you would never think it the human psyche is quite a difficult thing to explore but sometimes you find some

[ 29 : 23 ] Christians as if they've never experienced this joy but the thing is whatever it is that brings about whatever the circumstances like the psalmist where the enemies have wrongly accused him or have falsely accused him of all sorts and for a time the joy was rightfully his was hidden from sight but God caused it to bubble forth again God required it to be brought to sight something you know you can't there are times when you these early mornings in the last while have you looked over to the Harris Hills have you seen them well if they're obscured by fog by the mist that has been part of the feature of this good weather the hills are nowhere to be seen does it mean that the hills have gone of course it doesn't you know the hills are there they're a constant they're immovable and God's grace

God's privileged possession that is used by reason of what he has done in Christ Jesus ever remains the same Samuel Rutherford was writing from a Burdine prison and he was telling his friends from such a dark place for him which you would imagine would have suppressed his joy and made it to be something that was impossible for him to experience and yet the presence of God with him in that prison was his joy he said day and night he wouldn't have been without it he wouldn't have been without the experience or the experience of the joy of the Lord full of glory a joy unspeakable the final thought is this that whatever it may be that causes us to lose sight of what

God has given to us in Christ Jesus God alone is able to restore that to our senses to our to make us aware of it that it hasn't gone away that it hasn't disappeared permanently God will reestablish it we know from the life of Job in the Old Testament how much he had to endure and yet the same Job was able to speak in the depth of despair words that speak of God's purposes in them where he was looking forward to deliverance from the pit because he knew that a ransom was paid I have found a ransom Job said how could he say that well only by way of God's direct intervention and revelation of this grace recently we're looking at the prophecy of

Zephaniah and the prophet there said the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty he will save he will rejoice over thee with joy he will rest in his love he will joy over thee with singing God's joy the Christian's joy the believer's joy if God has promised to rejoice the Christian should know something of the joy of the Lord in his grief it was one of the Puritans who once said if there is faith and he's talking about Christians he said if there is faith keep your faith and if you keep your faith you will keep your joy seems an obvious thing if you keep your faith it will keep your joy because us all graces they are never stand alone graces they are all linked together and they support one another and they feed one another and they ensure that when one thing seems to be failing that something else will ensure that it remains nothing gives the

Lord Jesus pleasure like seeing the saviour seeing the fruit of his soul he rejoices the fruit of his labour the fruit of the travel of his soul it satisfies him we are told and he rejoices in seeing the Lord's people with their hearts heavy because of sin but at the same time able to rise up above circumstances through God's grace my soul the psalmist said shall be joyful in the Lord that shall rejoice in his salvation what gives you greatest pleasure in the world tells much about what you are there are many things that the world holds out for us to rejoice in to take pleasure in to delight in but for the believer nothing gives that believer greater pleasure greater joy than their own salvation and very closely followed by the salvation of others and that is what we look for when we see what the

[ 35 : 59 ] Lord can do for us he can do it for anyone and our prayer is that he would continue to do that let us pray Lord our God we give thanks that you are a God who has brought to our experience many many delights and many pleasures that are free from all carnality there are things that this world delights in are often carnal often of the flesh and they will evaporate and they will cease to provide satisfaction and like your people they will return again and again to the place where they found delight and where they continue to find delight we pray for your blessing upon us upon our congregation upon all who are part of it and especially we remind you at the throne of grace of the needs of others at this time especially grieving family we pray for them that this visitation in providence would be sanctified to them and that

I would gravitate towards the God who is God over all and with all things well forgive sin in Jesus Amen we're going to sing from this psalm psalm 35 and the last two verses of the psalm in Gaelic the last two verses in Gaelic verse 27 and 28 At Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 39 : 43 ] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.