

What is true Christian joy? True Christian joy is our participation in the joy of Christ. What is the joy of Christ? The joy of Christ is in the fullness of the Holy Spirit in fellowship with the Father.

Christian Joy

The Fruit of the Spirit

Beale, Jim (US-KOP)

1. Introduction
 - a. The Conundrum of the Joyless Christian
 - b. Joy as an essential fruit
 - c. Joy in relation to Love
2. The source of Christian Joy
 - a. Joy in the OT
 - b. Joy in the NT
3. Analysis of Christian Joy
 - a. Knowledge
 - b. Goodness
 - c. Righteousness
4. Application
 - a. Hindrances to Joy
 - b. Helps to Joy

Introduction

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (Galatians 5:22-23)

The Scriptures speak of holy joy as a great part of Biblical Christianity. And being such an important part of true godliness, it is often pressed upon God's people with great earnestness. Scripture says to "Delight thyself in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4). "Rejoice in the LORD, O ye righteous: for praise is comely for the upright" (Psalm 33:1). "Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous;" (Psalm 97:12). "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad" (Matt 5:12) "Finally, brethren, rejoice in the Lord" (Phil. 3:1). And "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, rejoice." (Phil 4:4). "Rejoice evermore" (1 Thess. 5:16). Joy is listed here before us as the second of the fruits of the Spirit of holiness, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy," etc. (Gal 5:22).

If joy is an essential ingredient of Christian holiness, and so it is, then why does there seem to be so little Christian joy among God's people? Why do so many Christians, especially those with a more doctrinal disposition, walk around with long faces, looking solemn and not giving much indication of a true joy within? Many of these are well-versed in the great truths of the gospel but perhaps, for one reason or another, have become suspicious of any or all displays of religious affection. But the Psalmist was exuberant: "I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil" (Psalm 119:162). The suppression or outright rejection of religious affections runs contrary to the purpose of the gospel which is to evoke great joy – Paul prayed, "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Romans 15:13), and Isaiah wrote: "my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation" (Isaiah 61:10). We really mustn't undervalue the importance of holy joy.

In fact, there is no true Christianity where there is no true Christian joy. Joy proves that what is in the mind is a delight to the heart. We've all seen exuberant children on Christmas morning, and yet such exuberance does not prove the truth of one's Christianity. There are some who receive the word with joy but, having no root in themselves, fall away when trials and temptations come. That is not a true Christian joy which withers away in the face of trials and persecutions. Men were willing for a season to rejoice in John the Baptist's light (John 5:35). They had a joy in his ministry but it was short-lived so this was no true Christian joy.

We know that the fruit of the Spirit is unto holiness (Romans 6:22) and that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life is to produce holiness. His work is to prepare the Bride for the Bridegroom and the pressing need is for holiness without which no man will see the Lord. Knowing that God's perfect holiness is opened up to us by a revelation of the individual moral attributes analogous to the way the pure white light of the sun is refracted into the colors of the rainbow; and so we strive for holiness, not directly, but by cultivating the individual fruits of the Spirit in that child-like humility which is the very heart of the character of Christ. For us to be conformed to Christ means that each of the individual fruits of the Spirit must be cultivated in us and joined in such a way as to produce true holiness in the life.

This work of the Spirit is carried out in the whole man, in the mind, the affections and the will – all aspects of what the Bible calls the heart. Thus the Scripture says that "the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth" (Eph 5:9) and so Christian joy cannot be understood apart from righteousness, goodness, and truth. True Christian joy will affect all three dimensions or faculties of the human nature: the mind, the affections and the will. So, for the Christian, joy is not a fleeting emotion

which comes and goes depending on our circumstances but flows from the eternal fountain of truth with righteousness and peace. For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. (Romans 14:17)

So with that as our introduction, let's look at a few key verses in the Old Testament and then to the New Testament to discover the source of Christian joy. Then we will analyze the Biblical idea of joy itself into the several faculties, and finally we'll end with some application of this to our own lives. My prayer is that we can grow in Christian joy by seeing the source, understanding its nature and by removing the hindrances which block up the flow of joy. May the Holy Spirit cultivate true Christian joy in our hearts!

The Source of Christian Joy

Old Testament

While there are many verses in the OT from which one might draw material to talk about joy, there are three verses to which I would like to draw your attention. These three verses are of such a distinct form that they've been given a special name, "Aufruf zur Freude," or "Summons to Joy" in English.

Notice the similar structure of these three verses:

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. (Zephaniah 3:14)

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. (Zechariah 2:10)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (Zechariah 9:9)

The parallels are quite striking in that each addresses the daughter of Zion with the imperative to shout and sing and rejoice greatly, and to be glad with all the heart. In each case, it is God's people who are directly summoned to joy, in spite of being pictured as in the midst of enemies. And the reason for the summons to joy is the same in each case.

The first of these Summons to Joy was written by Zephaniah --

Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more. (Zephaniah 3:14-15)

This summons to joy is based on a prophecy of the coming of Christ – the prophetic certainty of it is so great that though it was a future event at the time it was written, yet it was so certain as to be expressed as already completed. This is about that Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, that Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world (John 1:29), who now rules in the midst of His enemies (Ps 110:2) and dwells in the midst of His people. John saw Him in the midst of the seven candlesticks as one like unto the Son of man (Rev 1:13). This is Christ the Lord, of whom the prophets wrote! Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart!

This is the second glorious prophecy of the coming of Christ:

Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD. And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people: and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee. (Zechariah 2:10-11)

. The ground of rejoicing is the coming of One infinitely great, as the Scripture reveals the mystery that He is Jehovah sent by Jehovah of Hosts. The promise given is a simple-sounding one, that we will be His people. But do not underestimate the glorious promise because it is expressed in few words – it is the one and the same covenantal promise throughout Scripture which brings with it blessings too glorious for us to conceive in our present unsanctified condition. In His presence is fullness of joy (Psalm 16:11) but eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him (1 Cor 2:9). But even a glimmer of the joy which the Father has in the Son raises our hearts from the dunghill of despair into the eternal fellowship of Father and Son. Oh what a incalculable blessing to be numbered among God's people! *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion!!*

And here is the third summons to joy which is again looks forward to the coming of Christ:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (Zechariah 9:9)

The believers of Zechariah's day were called upon to rejoice greatly, to shout because of the coming of the great King in humility having salvation. Truly if this just King was coming in wrath, riding on a white horse and followed by the armies of heaven (Rev 19) this would be no Summons to Joy, but a Summons to Terror. But the command is to rejoice greatly because this great King is coming in humility bringing salvation. Truly he had every right to come in wrath but chose rather to come in love, and in such a great love as to come to bear the shame and reproach of His people, and to take away the sins of His people.

Imagine that you lived in a city in olden times which had greatly mocked and offended your King and refused to pay the tribute which was due to Him. You know of other cities which had mocked this great King and you know that He went and destroyed those places. The King of Assyria boasted "Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?" (Isaiah 37:11) And of the great King it is said that "all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Daniel 4:35). You know your dreadful situation and everyone in your city knows that they ought to be terrified since this great King has destroyed cities far greater than your own. This great King destroyed the old world with the flood. He destroyed Sodom with fire. And now, as the King's messenger slowly opens the word of this great King, the people are in dread of words of wrath, as Amos had told the people of His time, "prepare to meet thy God, O Israel," (Amos 4:12) but instead, you hear words of wonder -- God intended to send His own Son to redeem the people from His own terrible wrath – "*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion – thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation.*"

Oh, this is cause for joy unspeakable! God Himself would come to take away the judgment against His people, to cast out the enemy and to dwell in the midst of His people. He was not coming in wrath as

might be expected and warranted – but in great humility, bearing the reproach due to us, bearing the shame due to us and, thereby bringing with Him salvation. It is only really possible to sense the greatness of the joy against the backdrop of the expectation of wrath.

God's people of old were given these marvelous messages in the midst of great darkness. The darkness of the path leading to the birth of the Messiah summons all the more urgently to joy, making it imperative to sing and rejoice greatly because of the coming of the Christ to redeem His people with His own life. As the darkness of the night seems to increase before dawn, yet the bursting forth of the sun brings light and life and joy. These three Summons to Joy passages represent the overflowing joy in the heart of the Old Testament and each offers a joy-filled glimpse of the coming of the conquering King.

New Testament

One chilly evening while some shepherds were out tending their flocks in the fields by night, trying to stay warm, suddenly the darkness lit up and an angel brought word to them saying, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). The King of Israel had come at last! – we know the story – this one whose coming was the source and summons to joy in the OT had just then been born in the insignificant little town of Bethlehem, which was little among the thousands of Judah (Micah 5:2). How seemingly insignificant in the world – a babe born to poor parents in a manger, in an insignificant village –oh, but this little one was the Desire of all Nations, the joy of every longing heart.

"A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world" (John 16:21). So, how great must have been the joy at the birth of this child, not merely a human being but the God-man, the Second Person of the Trinity joined to a human nature. Mary could not but have rejoiced at the birth of her first-born but how much more in being instrumental in the incarnation of her Saviour (Luke 1:47)? The marvel of it just adds to the joy, for such great displays of incomprehensible Divine power are a summons to great joy for the humble people of God.

In Luke 10, we read of the time when Jesus sent out 70 of his followers, two by two, having given them power to heal because they returned "with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name" (Luke 10:17). Power to heal and power over evil spirits are great powers indeed, and one in which it would be hard not to rejoice! But Jesus is clear – "in this rejoice not." We can generalize this and says that no matter how great the spiritual gift, no matter how great the spiritual accomplishment, even if Satan should fall from heaven like lightning, wisdom would always reply with the words, "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). On the day of judgment, many will say, Lord, Lord have we not cast out devils in your name? But casting out devils doesn't rise to the level of having one's name written in heaven because Jesus will say to them, "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity" (Matt 7:22-23). None of us may have great spiritual gifts, yet if our name is written in heaven, we can greatly rejoice. This is the humility of joy – our joy is not in gift in us or accomplishment by us, neither by nature nor by grace. Again, neither natural nor supernatural gifts, natural nor supernatural accomplishments are to be the ground of our joy. "In this rejoice not." Because when we are strong, then we are weak. And we are weak when our joy is in ourselves, in our gifts and accomplishments for the Lord. We must

rejoice in our weakness, that our names are written in heaven, or we have no strength from joy but only weakness: “for the joy of the LORD is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

In the words in Luke 10, we have the only recorded instance in which the Lord Jesus Christ is said to rejoice in the NT – “In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight” (Luke 10:21).

What was the cause of His rejoicing? Jesus had just admonished His disciples not to rejoice in the temporal things but in God’s unconditional election. And here he exults in the sovereignty of God in revealing deep spiritual truth to the simple and unlearned while allowing that very simplicity to obscure the truth from the wise and prudent. God’s ways are not man’s ways, and God will destroy the wisdom of the wise. “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent” (1 Cor 1:19). The wise and prudent can by no means get rid of themselves or rise above themselves in order to enter into that humility or poverty of spirit which alone is consistent with true Christian joy. This humility implies the death of the self and the wise and prudent naturally recoil from such things as the death of the self - all their worth is in self. Little children receive the simple truth that Christian joy rejoices not at earthly things but can be joyful in anticipation of the promise of the Father knowing that He will do everything He says. Let us then become like little children and make our calling and election sure (1 Peter 1:10) so that our joy will become more and more full, and more and more grounded in Christ alone.

In the Upper Room discourse, Jesus told His disciples, “ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you” (John 16:22). While some commentators understand this with respect to the time between the death of Christ and the second coming of Christ, it is hard to fully reconcile that idea with the Scriptures. We read that those women who went to the tomb, “went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word” (Matthew 28:8). And when Jesus appeared to the disciples, their joy was so overwhelming that they didn’t have room in their minds to process what was happening – it says, “they still did not believe for joy, and marveled” (Luke 24:51). And when Jesus ascended into heaven, “they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy” (Luke 24:52). So, while there is some sense to the idea that the ultimate joy awaits the return of the Lord and the marriage feast of the Lamb, nevertheless the disciples did have great joy when they saw Him again – just as He had said – and their joy was such that no man could take it from them. Their joy did not turn to sorrow when He ascended into heaven but remained.

The Christian’s true joy then arises from coming to know the resurrected Christ. Yes, we know that He suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18) but now He lives! That is what He said, “I am He who lives, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore. Amen. And I have the keys of Hades and of Death” (Revelation 1:18). Christian joy is founded not just on the fact that He was delivered up for our offenses but just as much, if not more, on the fact that He was raised for our justification (Rom 4:25). If we are to have true Christian joy, it must be encountered in the resurrected Christ who “dies no more” (Rom 6:9).

Peter wrote that “though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8). True faith rejoices in the possession of Christ because “Christ in you [is] the hope of glory” (Col 1:27) – Christ in you is the certainty of future glory -- and the faith which receives

Christ as the soul's all-in-all is that faith which rejoices in Him with joy inexpressible because our present union with Him is the certainty of future glory. If this is truly believed, then the soul will rejoice with joy inexpressible. The soul which esteems Christ little will rejoice in Him but little, but that soul which knows the infinite weight of its guilt before God in contrast with the beauty of the perfect righteousness of Christ, will esteem Christ of infinite worth. Jehovah Tsidkenu – what is He to you?

Analysis of Christian Joy

As I mentioned at the outset, the idea is to consider the individual fruits of the spirit in relation to truth, goodness and righteousness and what has been said already will hopefully have laid the foundation for this analysis.

Truth

All joy is based on knowledge. We must know that our team has won a decisive victory in order to rejoice in that victory. If we're not sure about the outcome, or if we have false information about the outcome, we might refrain from rejoicing, or rejoice when we ought not.

Christian Joy is found very much in the dimension of truth. As the ocean swells to its highest tide when the moon is full and gives the most light, so too does our joy mount up to its heights when the truth of the gospel shines most full. And when the sun comes forth as a bridegroom out of his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race, the lesser light of the night vanishes away. All other joys fade away before the greatness of our joy in the Bridegroom. As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee (Isaiah 62:5). And John the Baptist said, "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled" (John 3:29). If it was right for the friend of the Bridegroom to rejoice greatly, how much more should the Bride herself rejoice? When the Bridegroom comes, the Bride will enter into joy forevermore in blessed union with the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the knowledge needed here is more than to know about the Lord Jesus Christ. True joy rises in the heart from coming to know the Divine Person who is the Truth. You must come to Him by way of repentance but take care to seek Him for Himself, as He is the true Good, and not for anything less. To know God the Father through Him is life eternal (John 17:3) because He is "the Way, the Truth and the Life" (John 14:6). To know the Truth, then, means to know the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrected state – the truth is in Jesus (Eph 4:21) – rejoice in the Truth.

Goodness

All joy arises from the acquisition or possession of some good. Think of a time when you felt a great joy, perhaps at your engagement, or wedding, or at the birth of a child, or the purchase of a home. The victory of a sports team seems to be the source of great joy for many. All these things involve the acquisition of something. Whether it is a spouse or a house, or a victory over the other team, joy comes from owning or coming to possess something which is believed to be good or of value. Now, most of the things in our lives which give us temporal joy are fleeting. Our favorite sports team is bound to lose again and that brand new car will get scratched sooner or later. So, these joys are fleeting and vain.

But Christian joy is everlasting joy, as we read "the redeemed of the LORD shall return, and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head" (Isaiah 51:11). Why is that? Because the

good from which Christian joy arises is eternal good – to be clear, it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself who is the good from which Christian joy flows as from a fountain. Having Christ in the heart cannot but produce joy. He is the Pearl of Great Price, freely offered in the gospel to all who will come. The value of the good upon which Christian joy is based is infinite, since it raises us from the dungeon and the dunghill, from a liability to a never-ending punishment to never-ending blessedness and rejoicing, in Him, by Him and through Him – all by grace. Christian joy is new every morning, does not fade away, and does not depend on our personal circumstances. If a person is in Christ, he can be “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing” (2 Cor 6:10).

Righteousness

Asking the man on the street about the relationship of joy and righteousness would probably get some interesting answers. Those who get joy from a bottle or a pill, or by watching one sports team pummel another would probably not be able to make much sense of the question. But we should be able to make sense of it, if we consider what the Scriptures have to say:

I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels. (Isaiah 61:10)

Isaiah wrote that our joy is in God because He has clothed us with the robe of righteousness. He brought us into union with Christ, who is our righteousness – and when we are joyful in Christ, we are rejoicing in His righteousness imputed to us. And thus, as the Bride rejoices in being clothed with spotless white garments in anticipation of being joined to the Bridegroom, yet she knows she is being adorned with the beauty of Christ’s spotless righteousness. She rejoices in the God who cleanses her, and clothes her with His own robe of righteousness in order to present her to Himself in holiness.

Now, true Christian joy must always be accompanied with righteousness, “for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17). There can be no joy in the Holy Spirit where there is unrighteousness because the Spirit and the flesh

True Christian joy tends to righteousness. As Christian joy is pleasing to God because it shows that we are pleased with Christ, so being pleased and rejoicing in Christ tends to produce righteousness in the life. As the dim lights of the stars vanish away with the rise of the sun, so too do the joys of temporal things vanish away when the joy of Christ takes possession of the heart. Those earthly things which lead the heart away from Christ are less esteemed because Christ is more greatly esteemed. No one will be careless with that in which they take the greatest joy.

Application

Hindrances to Joy

Most of these points have been mentioned as we went along, but now let’s directly consider what hinders the expression of Christian joy in our lives. We all need to experience Christian joy

1. Sin and Unbelief
 - a. An unbeliever cannot have true joy. His joy can only be in those things which are passing away because he has no apprehension of eternal things, he cannot see the beauty of

Christ. Without faith it is impossible to have true Christian joy because the unregenerate person is alienated from the source of joy, the one and only good.

- b. A Christian may wrestle with unbelief in various forms and this always tends to dampen joy. Joy is like a canary in a coal mine which sings and sings for joy every day until there is a noxious gas accumulation in the mine and it, being very sensitive to air quality, is the first to die. The miners would notice that the canary had gone silent and know they were in danger. So, if you've noticed or if you notice that the canary in your soul has stopped singing, watch out because sin may have seeped in as a noxious gas or unbelief may have crept and you unaware. When you turn from your sin to the Lord, you will cry out with David, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation" (Psalm 51:12). Salvation is of the LORD (Jonah 1:12).

2. Ignorance

- a. It seems to me that some Christians place so much emphasis on the death of Christ, that the importance of the resurrection comes to be diminished in their minds. Obviously the death of Christ is of central importance for Christian doctrine but, nevertheless if Christ be not risen, then our preaching is vain, and our faith is also vain. If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins (1 Cor 15:14,17). I'm not suggesting that such a person really doesn't believe in the resurrection but by reducing the emphasis on the resurrection, or rather, by not looking at the atonement apart from the resurrection, the degree of joy is also diminished.
 - i. We must look at the atonement through the lens of the ascended/resurrected Christ, as part of the greater high priestly work.
 - ii. Looking at the atonement to the exclusion of the resurrection could be consistent with a kind of historical faith, as manifest by those disciples on the road to Emmaus. Jesus Himself asked them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" (Luke 24:17) It was their ignorance of the resurrection that made them to be sad, and an overemphasis on His death can lead to a diminished joy or an counterfeit joyless Christianity.
 - iii. The atonement only makes sense from the POV of the resurrection and the resurrection only makes sense from the POV of the ascension because the application of the satisfaction is all towards the end of perfecting the Bride.
- b. A second hindrance to Christian joy may arise from a negative attitude toward religious affections in general. Perhaps the faulty reasoning might go like this: "because those who 'received the word with joy' also later 'fell away' (Luke 8:13) we should be careful not to be like them. Maybe we should have just a little joy, or maybe we shouldn't risk having joy at all. Let's just be solemn and sober." But this is false reasoning! And so dangerous! Just because there are false displays of religious affection ought not to make us reject all or even strong degrees of religious affection, for true Christianity consists much in holy religious affections. Where there are no holy affections, there can be no true Christianity. And great affections should not be seen as inconsistent with true Christianity – in heaven there will be an overflowing of holy joy, and even now Paul calls us to rejoice in the Lord always: and he says it again, Rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

Dear listener, if you are a Christian without joy, going through the motions, then what you need is Christ to open your blind eyes to His beauty. When you see Him as the Pearl of Great Price you will be willing to sell all you own to possess Him. And when you to take possession of Him, as He is freely offered in the gospel to all – without money and without price – when you really see Him with the eye of faith and receive Him, then you will rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory.

Helps to Joy

It is the sight of the divine beauty of Christ that bows the will and draws the heart to Him. A sight of the greatness of God in his attributes may overwhelm men and be more than they can endure; nevertheless the enmity and opposition of the heart may remain in its full strength and the will remain inflexible. Whereas one glimpse of the moral and spiritual glory of God, by the supreme beauty of Jesus Christ shining into the dark heart, overcomes and abolishes this opposition, and inclines the soul to Christ, as it were, by an irresistible power. The sight of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, works true supreme love to God. This sight of the supreme loveliness of his nature is the proper foundation of love to God, and love to God on this ground is truly above any thing that can come from a natural love, which is in the hearts of devils as well as men. But this spiritual view of Christ begets true spiritual and holy joy in the soul, which is indeed joy in God, and glorying in him, and not rejoicing in ourselves. (Edwards, Jonathan. True Grace Distinguished from the Experience of Devils)

And so, to cultivate the spiritual fruit of Christian joy we must strive to get a sight, maybe just a glimpse at first and then a greater and a clearer sight of the spiritual beauty of Christ, and to possess Him for ourselves. We must have the risen Christ in our spiritual view and seek toward a greater view of His beauty, in His humility and His holiness. What Paul wrote hits home: “we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). To have true Christian joy we must have Christ and so to have greater Christian joy we must have more of Christ. He must increase and we must decrease. The more we have of Him, the greater is our light and the higher rises the tide of our joy. When the sun of righteousness rises with healing in His wings then those who sit in darkness will see the light and rejoice in the light. When we know as we are known, our joy will be full. These feeble earthly joys with which fill up the hours of our gloom all fade away when the daystar arises in our hearts –replaced with that joy of the Bride for the Bridegroom wholly sanctified and raised to the highest degree. This is a spiritual joy which towers above any natural joy or happiness and is not comparable with it – it is inexpressible and full of glory – now the Holy Spirit cleanses the church by the washing of the water by the word that He might present her to the Bridegroom a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, so that she should be holy and without blemish (Eph 5:25-26).

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,
and to present you faultless
before the presence of his glory
with exceeding joy,
to the only wise God our Saviour,
be glory and majesty,
dominion and power,
both now and ever.
Amen.

(Jude 1:24)

Quotes:

There is no pure earthly joy, for it hath always a mixture of grief and sadness in the inward retired closet of the heart. It is of such deadness and inefficacy that it drives not out of the heart all discontentments and anxieties, but if the most jovial man, that seems to be transported with his delights would but retire within and examine his own conscience, he would find those delights have but little power to affect his heart. He would find terrible and dreadful representations there, that his joys may well for a time darken them, but cannot drive them away. And then it is the very natural law and fatal necessity that grief follows those joys at the heels, yea, is perpetually attending them, to come in their place. God hath so conjoined them together, and so disposed them, that men's joy shall be mingled with grief, but their grief is pure and unmixed, and that he who draws up joy to him from the creatures, must draw grief and vexation in that same chain, inseparably annexed to it by the wise ordination of God.

Binning, Hugh. The Works of the Rev. Hugh Binning . Kindle Edition.