

Hebrews 7:11

The Coming of Joy

We have been thinking about what I've termed the "bag of blessings" that comes to us in Christ, the things that are the experiential divide between the Old testament priesthood and the priesthood of Christ. As we enter into the Christmas season we will continue on that theme, but with a focus on the impact of His coming. And I want to begin with the reality of Joy. There was little in the Old Testament priesthood which spoke of joy. All of our entrances unto God were bought with the blood of the innocent, and the whole system was designed to keep us at a safe distance from God... close enough to worship when commanded, far enough to escape destruction... But of joy, deep and profound; of joy, strong and insurmountable; of joy, empowering and uplifting; of joy beyond us and within us very little was known in the Old Testament. But in the coming of Christ, joy is both the commandment AND the reality. It is the flavor of our experience with Christ, for just as His life is ours, His joy is ours!

I. CIRCUMSTANTIAL JOY

A. There were some instances of joy that were circumstantial - some from the actions of God in the life of Israel,

1. When David slew Goliath

1 Samuel 18:6 (NKJV) ⁶ Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.

2. When David was installed as king

1 Chronicles 12:40 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ Moreover those who were near to them, from as far away as Issachar and Zebulun and Naphtali, were bringing food on donkeys and camels, on mules and oxen—provisions of flour and cakes of figs and cakes of raisins, wine and oil and oxen and sheep abundantly, for there was joy in Israel.

3. When the ark was returned to Jerusalem

1 Chronicles 15:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Then David spoke to the leaders of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers accompanied by instruments of music, stringed instruments, harps, and cymbals, by raising the voice with resounding joy.

1 Chronicles 15:25 (NKJV) ²⁵ So David, the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord from the house of Obed-Edom with joy.

4. When David installed Solomon as king

1 Kings 1:40 (NKJV) ⁴⁰ And all the people went up after him; and the people played the flutes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth seemed to split with their sound.

5. At the Dedication of the Temple

1 Kings 8:66 (NKJV) ⁶⁶ On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to

their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the Lord had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people.

6. At the victory of Jehoshaphat

2 Chronicles 20:27 (NKJV) ²⁷ Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat in front of them, to go back to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them rejoice over their enemies.

7. Reforms of Hezekiah

2 Chronicles 30:26 (NKJV) ²⁶ So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel, there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.

8. At the dedication of the second temple

Ezra 6:16 (NKJV) ¹⁶ Then the children of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the descendants of the captivity, celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy.

9. At Nehemiah's reading of the law

Nehemiah 8:9 (NKJV) ⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

10. At the deliverance of Esther

Esther 8:16–17 (NKJV) ¹⁶ The Jews had light and gladness, joy and honor. ¹⁷ And in every province and city, wherever the king's command and decree came, the Jews had joy and gladness, a feast and a holiday. Then many of the people of the land became Jews, because fear of the Jews fell upon them.

B. There were times of religious observances that were commanded to be joyful, the feasts were given by God to remind Israel of the promises that were still pending, of the fulfillment of God's word unto them

Leviticus 23:39–44

C. But these feasts could never bring the fulfillment of the promised joy, because they WERE NOT the fulfillment of the promised work. This is why they have passed away from the lives of those who follow after Christ. For they end in Christ who IS our joy! To bind ourselves unto the feasts as a forever ordinance is to deny the Christ who is their fulfillment. For Jesus is the source of our joy. He is the source of that joy for He is the answer of the hope that was promised from the Garden itself, that Satan would be defeated and that death, which entered because of sin would be forever swallowed up in the victory of God...I

*Isaiah 25:8 (NKJV) ⁸ He will swallow up death forever,
And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces;
The rebuke of His people He will take away from all the
earth; For the Lord has spoken.*

II. THE BROKEN COMMAND

- A. The greatest commandment was to love the Lord with all of our heart, soul and mind, and to DO this is the actual expression of the joy that was supposed to drive them. It is the hope of that promised victory given to us in Christ.
- B. Though there were times of circumstantial joy, and times of commanded joyful activities,. There were precious few moments of joy that were based in the joy of knowing God - and so ultimately, that was the command which they were judged for breaking...

Deuteronomy 28:47–51

- C. The Psalms are filled with the promise of Joy, with the truth that loving God SHOULD be a joyful thing...

Psalm 5:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You.

*Psalm 16:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand
are pleasures forevermore.*

*Psalm 35:9 (NKJV) ⁹ And my soul shall be joyful in the
Lord; It shall rejoice in His salvation.*

*Psalm 63:5 (NKJV) ⁵ My soul shall be satisfied as with
marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You
with joyful lips.*

*Psalm 89:15 (NKJV) ¹⁵ Blessed are the people who know
the joyful sound! They walk, O Lord, in the light of Your
countenance.*

D. The prophets rebuke Israel for not having joy,
but they also promise a joy that will come from
God Himself and will guard them by His own
power

Isaiah 49:13–16

Isaiah 51:11–16

E. This is what Jesus meant when He attested that
Abraham rejoiced at seeing His day...

John 8:56 (NKJV) ⁵⁶ Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad

III. GOD FULFILLS HIS OWN COMMAND

A. The coming of Christ is the insertion of God into humanity's dire need in a way that would change everything!

B. Jesus applied this promise to Himself

Isaiah 61:1–3 (NKJV) ¹ “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, Because the Lord has anointed Me To preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn, ³ To console those who mourn in Zion, To give them beauty for ashes, The oil of joy for mourning, The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

*Isaiah 61:10 (NKJV) ¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord,
My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed
me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me
with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks
himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself
with her jewels.*

- C. This is the crux of our hope and joy in Christ, we have been given a new heart that delights in God and takes JOY in His presence... this reality was the promise given to God's people for the entire course of the Old Testament. But it was never realized until the coming of Christ. Joy was the immediate response of all creation, and of those in whom God was at work...

*Luke 1:44–45 (NKJV) ⁴⁴ For indeed, as soon as the voice
of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped
in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who believed, for
there will be a fulfillment of those things which were
told her from the Lord.”*

D. Joy was the promise of God and the announcement of God at the birth of His beloved Son...

Luke 2:8–14 (NKJV) ⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. ¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying: ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, goodwill toward men!”

E. Joy is the gift of God unto us; He Himself gives us joy at the reality of His own presence

Romans 15:13 (NKJV) ¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

IV. JESUS IS OUR JOY

John 15:1–11

A. More than an outward thing; a mere circumstantial garment to be worn and then discarded when circumstances change; Joy is the internal character of God, imparted to us, a product of the Spirit of God dwelling within His people...

Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV) ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

B. This is so profoundly true that it is even more pronounced when our circumstances are not as we would like. The joy is insurmountable, it is unconquerable, it is the product of Grace being

worked out in the soul of the believer. We may not always FEEL the joy, but we are always being washed with in by the Spirit of God who dwells within us. It is never removed completely, even when we lose our way and focus on the circumstance, God still reminds us of the presence of His joy.

1 Peter 1:6–9 (NKJV) ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.

C. John Owen writes:

"It is that inexpressible satisfaction which is wrought in the minds of believers by the Holy Ghost, from an evidence of their interest in

the love of God by Christ, with all the fruits of it, present and to come, with a spiritual sense and experience of their value, worth, and excellency. This gives the soul a quiet repose in all its trials, refreshment when it is weary, peace in trouble, and the highest satisfaction in the hardest things that are to be undergone for the profession of the name of Christ,"

Romans 5:1–5

D. This is the hope of Christ in us. The knowledge of our own transformation into the likeness and character of God, the absolute reality of that glory... the abiding presence of God dwelling among us and imparting to us HIS OWN JOY, at the full accomplishment of His purpose in sending Christ unto a rebel world... He has redeemed us for His own glory, He will never let us fall; and His light is the life we need, the hope and grace upon which we stand and the absolute power of God revealed to us and IN us!

1John 1:1–4

E. Ultimately this is the work of God through Christ being formed IN US. This is the heart of why our salvation is the work of God from start to finish, it is the glory of God to do this great work, for only the POWER of God could have accomplished it!

Jude 24–25 (NKJV) ²⁴ Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, ²⁵ To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.