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Studies in Acts

A Distinctive, Supernatural Joy - Part II

[Acts 2:46-47]

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- Acts 2:46-47- We are told that those early Christians “... *broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God...*” [NIV].
- The KJV says they ate their meat “... *with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God*”

3 ☐

- Phil. 3: 1 “*Finally, my brothers, rejoice in the Lord!*”
- Phil. 4:4 “*Rejoice in the Lord always, I will say it again: Rejoice!*”

4 ☐

In I Peter 1:1 & 8, Peter writes to Christians he had never even met, and yet he knows they are experiencing “*joy unspeakable and full of glory*” [KJV]; or as the NIV says it, they were “... *filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.*”

5 ☐ **Some Characteristics of this
“Joy of the Holy Spirit”**

1. It is associated with “the fear of the Lord”
2. It is distinct and different from the world’s idea of happiness

3. It is the very essence of what the Kingdom of God is all about

4. It is the source of the supernatural strength that enabled early Christians to live above the circumstances

5. It is independent of circumstances

6 What is the explanation of this unique and extraordinary joy?

- Is this something we can all obtain yet today? - The answer is yes! All we have to do is exactly what those first Christians did! -
- Receive God's Word with gladness!
- The KJV says in Acts 2: 41, "*Then they that gladly received his word were baptized ...*" -
- NOTE that the starting point, ... the thing that initially opened the door and led to this unique and supernatural joy, was their response to the Word of God! They received the Word gladly!

7

Acts 2:37-38 says: "*When the people heard this,*" [i.e. the Word of God which Peter preached to them] "*... they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Brothers, what shall we do?' Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'*"

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The great secret:

- "... happiness is the consequence of something else!"

9 What are the specific things Christians learn from God's Word which bring about this joy?

- 1. Christians are full of joy **because of the deliverance they have received from what they once were** [Acts 2:37; John 3:36; Eph. 2:1-6].
- 2. **Christians are full of joy because they have a ‘new life’ in them (i.e. now! In this present life!)** -II Cor. 5:17; Acts 5:20; Romans 6:4.
- 3. **Christians are full of joy because they live the present life knowing that God has a glorious future eternity in store for them!**

10 

Death is viewed in a much different light by the Christian:

- I Cor. 15:56 - The sting has been taken out of it! - *“The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.”* - This is why people are afraid of death!
- * But Rom. 8:1 says: *“There is, therefore, now, no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.”*
- * I Cor. 15:55-57 *“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* - Christ is risen! He has done away with the power of death and the grave to hold the Christian!
- * Phil. 1:21, 23 *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain ... having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better.”*

11 

That is why these people in Acts were full of a spirit of joy and rejoicing! They saw through life! *“This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith!”* [I Jn. 5:4]. They saw beyond death! They saw a glimpse of the glory that was awaiting them in Christ!

12 

- Rom. 8:18 *“I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”*
- Phil. 3:20-21 *“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.”*
- II Cor. 5:1-2 *“Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling” -*

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- Therefore, the Christian's attitude toward death is: "Let the wars come. Let the bombs fall. Let disease and pestilence destroy the land. So what if I die? What will that mean? A transfiguration to a higher life. Living in the presence of our creator God." - *"In His presence is fullness of joy and pleasures forever more"* [Psa. 16:11].
- * II Cor. 4:17-18 *"Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."*
- Therefore: *"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."* [Col. 3:2]!