

Sunday August 20th sermon: "We Share in Christ's Joy! -- The God of All Comforts (Pt 29)"

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,  
by John Pittman Hey

John 15:11; Luke 15:1-7

God comforts us by the oath He made to Christ, appointing Him our high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Very early in Christ's ministry, He exhibited a particular, zealous delight to do God's will, when He cleansed the temple, upset the money changers' tables, and let all the animals loose.

In a dramatic way, Christ here acted out God's opposition to their animal sacrifices, in which He took no delight, because the people had reduced their offerings to God to mere commercial transactions.

They clung to the animal sacrifices, that God did not delight in, and they despised Christ, the one sacrifice that God so delights in.

The people would soon murder the Lord Jesus, thereby unwittingly, in their hatred of the Savior, slaying the sacrifice of God's Lamb!

Christ communicates to us His delight to do God's will, and the joy that He has in it. Christ prays that we will enter into His joy!

Just before He died for us, Jesus told us of the Father's love for Christ and for all who trust in Him. Jesus promised us that the Spirit of God would come down and indwell us. Jesus promised He would raise us all up from the grave at the end. Jesus told us He is preparing a place for us in Glory, and that He will come again and take us there to be with Him forever!

Christ instructed us to love the brethren, to love the Father, and of His love for us. He urged us to be obedient to His commandments because of that love.

In other words, we are to be a joyous, obedient band of brothers with Christ, our prince and our kinsman redeemer, knit together in joy, love, faith and courage. The purpose is that, in the end, all the joyous things Christ promised will be accomplished in every one of us who have trusted in Him.

Christ longs for us to enter into His joy in all this, into His delight to do God's will.

How can we refuse? After all, our joy and Christ's joy are the outflow of God's comfort to us in saving us by our great high priest and His perfect offering for our sin!

Christ told us all these things while He was with us for a reason: "now come I to Thee [the Father], and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves."

As Christ redeems us by His righteousness and bloody sacrifice in our place, the comfort of God sets in upon us, as we grasp the unspeakable riches of His love and grace toward us!

Christ's joy is in saving His loved ones, His sheep. He told us in his example of the ninety and nine sheep, but one was lost. When He finds that lost sheep, He lays it on His shoulders rejoicing, and brings it home to the fold, and calls his friends together and exclaims, rejoice with Me, for I have found my sheep that was lost!

Christ's joy is not in the sheep being lost, but rather in saving those that were lost!

In another place, Jesus describes His people as little children who have trusted in Him.

Jesus makes it clear: unless we are converted and become like little children, we cannot be saved! This is not something we can do to ourselves. Only the Spirit can change our minds and hearts.

We cannot be saved if we are trusting in ourselves, rather than coming to Jesus in our helplessness, and hopelessness, and weakness, and simplicity, and crying out to Him as the Only One Who can save us.

He issues a dire warning, that whoever offends, or harms, or tries to lead astray, one of the little ones that trust in Him, it would be better for that person to be drowned in the depths of the sea!

Jesus concludes the discussion this way: it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish!

Christ is speaking of all the people God has given to Him, and will come to Him, and that Christ has sworn to save for all time. He is speaking of all the little ones for whom He died, all the sheep that are His.

Christ has sworn to God and to us, that He will not lose a single one of us! His sacrifice has irrevocably redeemed us, and His intercession can never fail to keep His people safe all the way to our resurrection.

Notice that Christ has here repeated that glorious statement of God's will for us, as found in John 6 and Hebrews 10.

This will cannot be broken, and Christ delights to do God's will.

Christ's delight is to do away with animal sacrifices that cannot save, and to offer Himself as the only sacrifice that never fails to save all of His sheep, all of God's little children.

God's delight, Christ's delight, and the saints' delight, are therefore all of one, entangled together.

No wonder Christ prayed that His joy would be fulfilled in His people. His prayer cannot fail for any of us!