

“6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: 7 That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: 8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: 9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.” (1Pe 1:1-9)

I last spoke on this text on a miserable snowy, cold, Easter morning on April 8, 2007. There were 65 in attendance, 18 were visitors, and there were only fifteen of you here that still regularly attend; the others have moved away for the most part. Percentage wise, we have a large turnover in membership, although that is changing. More of you have roots down in the community and make a firmer commitment to the future of the church. We thank God for that.

Our text says that we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory..... Really? Is that the true condition of the people of God, or are we just pretending, sorta whistling past the cemetery, hoping that what we have heard about ghosts really isn't true. Our catechism speaks of a "vale of tears" in Question 26 and attributes this condition to the providence of our Heavenly Father. I would like to speak of this subject today under three heads. I. The paradox of joy: how can we have joy in a stinking world? II. The perspective of joy: Only temporary things stink. Nothing eternal does; III. The power of joy: Not stoicism, but joy. And then I would make some applications and conclusions.

I. The paradox of joy: how can we have joy in a stinking world?

A. First of all, we confess that this world falls far short of providing real contentment and satisfaction.

1. This is because it does not address the true and spiritual needs of man.
2. It addresses the body, but not the soul.
 - a. Jesus, What does it profit.....
 - b. Jesus, Thou fool, tonight thy soul....
 - c. Ecclesiastes 6:1-9
 - d. Ecclesiastes 8:11-17

B. Man was not created to satiate the physical senses, but these desires are figurative of much greater and more valuable things.

1. See Matthew 6:19ff

2. The kingdom of God is that which is above. Israel rejected the kingdom of God from the very beginning and sought an earthly kingdom. They spit upon and rejected their king from heaven, and they still do today.
3. Set your affections, as I spoke of recently about the lively hope that you and I have. We need to act like we really mean it.

II. The perspective of joy: Only temporary things stink. Nothing eternal does;

A. Treasures: Matt. 6:19, 20

B. See 2Cor 5: 16 For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; 18 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. 1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

C. The contrast is made very clear in Galatians 5: 16ff

1. Flesh: temporary works that pass away. Decay and stink after a while.
2. Spirit of the soul. Does love stink; joy, peace, longsuffering, etc.
3. Your house in heaven will never burn down; nor get moldy and dry rot. The streets of gold don't get potholes, and the trees along the River of Life don't get diseases and die.
4. People say, "You Christians are so heavenly minded you are of no earthly good:" Jesus never taught such nonsense: He said that you are of no earthly good unless you are heavenly minded. Things enslave you and we spend a lot of time taking care of things, imagining that they are taking care of us.
5. If your world stinks, maybe you better take the trash out.

III. The power of joy: Not stoicism, but joy.

A. Neh. 8:10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

B. De 28:47 Because thou servedst not the LORD thy God with joyfulness, and with gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things; 48 Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the LORD shall send against thee, in hunger, and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things: and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until he have destroyed thee.

- C. 1Pe 4:13 But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.
- D. 1Jo 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.
- E. SEE HC 58. Can you begin to rejoice in eternal things, in the promises of God. This is eternal life.

Conclusion.

Ec 2:24 There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God.

Ecc. 12:1ff. The evil days are coming. Don’t set your affections on the body.