

Whence Cometh Joy? – Luke 2:8-11

I. Introduction:

- A. With this text, you might think I've lost either my mind, or my calendar, but my calendar is still on the wall behind my computer.
1. What I'd like us to consider this evening is the joy of which the angel spoke the night of the Saviour's birth.
 2. *"The angel said unto them, 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."*
 3. Our theme for this evening is the **SOURCE** of joy.
 4. I know there is a difference between joy and happiness, but out of necessity, I'll be touching on both.
- B. Years ago I read a little bulletin insert about the **source of HAPPINESS**:
1. It said: Happiness not found in unbelief – **Voltaire, the atheist**, when dying, said, *"I wish I had never born."*
 2. It is not found in money: **Jay Gould**, the railroad speculator who died in 1892 and was worth \$71 billion in today's money, called himself *"a miserable devil."*
 3. Happiness isn't found in pleasure: immoral **Lord Byron** who was described by one woman as *"mad, bad and dangerous to know,"* said of himself *"My life is one of grief."*
 4. And it is not to be found in power – **Napoleon** said, *"I have founded empires, but I've FOUND only sorrow."*
 5. Shelly texted Monday saying that the man who founded North Idaho Dermatology, took his own life. Why?
- C. You are aware that we live in world searching frantically something called *"happiness."*
1. It has been falsely declared to be one of our innate rights as human beings, but it's as allusive as diamonds
 - a. The lottery plague which has infected our society feeds upon this search for happiness.
 - b. All the pot and liquor stores are fueled by a desire for something similar to happiness.
 2. There is a TV commercial for Land Rover which starts with the 7-mile Tianmen Mountain Road, and then it goes up the 999 steps at a 45% incline to the top of China Heaven's Gate landmark.
 - a. It implies that if you want real happiness in this world you need a new Land Rover.
 3. The network news almost daily advertises itself with a feel good story, but it gives you that story after 10 or 12 entirely depressing stories and 10 ads for medicines which will kill you – and you can't afford anyway.
 4. Most people's pay checks looks like swiss cheese after all the deductions, making people wonder how they are going to pay their bills after financing the liberal governments promises to everyone but them.
 5. Where can we find joy and happiness in this wonderful new 21st Century?
 6. Much of modern religion falsely promises to give its attendees something akin to happiness.
 7. And their auditoria are filled, proving only that they aren't fulfilling their promises.
- D. Where can we find joy and happiness?
1. Forget about anything you might find in the world.
 2. I can tell you that it can be found but only in the pages and Person of this Book – the Bible.
 3. *"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."*

II. The majority of references to JOY in the Bible come connected to SALVATION from sin.

- A. Where there is peace with God, there comes joy to the heart.
1. One of happiest songs ever sung came spontaneously from the Spirit-filled heart of Hannah in **I Samuel 2**.
 - a. *"Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.*
 - b. *There is none holy as the LORD: for there is none beside thee: neither is there any rock like our God.*
 - c. *Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.*
 - d. *The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength.*
 - e. *They that were full have hired out themselves for bread; and they that were hungry ceased: so that the barren hath born seven; and she that hath many children is waxed feeble.*
 - f. *The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*

- g. *The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.*
- h. *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them.*
- i. *He will keep the feet of his saints, and the wicked shall be silent in darkness; for by strength shall no man prevail. The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed."*

B. Notice two things about the joy of this song:

- 1. First it was **a joy of the heart**, a joy which God placed **within Hannah**.
- 2. Happiness from the outside is as wonderful as a cut flower in a kitchen vase – it is very real.
- 3. But the joy of the heart is like a rose growing by the window which sends its fragrance into the house on every breeze.
- 4. Happiness from the outside is precarious and short; usually only sweet for a while.
- 5. It is dependent on externals over which we have very little control.

C. **Viktor Frankl** was imprisoned by the Nazis in World War II because he was a Jew.

- 1. His wife, children and parents were all killed by the Germans.
 - a. The Gestapo make him strip naked and took everything that he owned.
 - b. And as they cut off his gold wedding band he said to himself:
 - c. *"You can take away my wife and children and clothing and freedom, but there is no one who can take from me my freedom to choose how I will react to what happens to me."*
- 2. If there is a peace or joy that dwells inside the heart, no one can take it away.
- 3. You might **choose** not to employ it or enjoy it, but it cannot be taken from you by anyone else.
- 4. And if you insert joy into a bad situation, you will get through it with spiritual and emotional good health.

D. From time to time we need to look at our **"happy lives"** and **analyze the source** of that positive emotion.

- 1. Is it dependent on our co-workers, the state of our business, the government, our wealth or our friends?
- 2. Or is it abiding in our heart, coming in with the Holy Spirit when He took up residence there?
 - a. *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace."*
 - b. And the Holy Spirit is the seal of our salvation and the earnest of our inheritance.

E. Secondly, notice that **Hannah's joy** was **expressed in prayer**.

- 1. A lot of people can't thank God for their happiness, because their particular joy disgusts the Lord.
- 2. So much of people's daily happiness comes in the form of sin and is therefore not worthy of praise.
- 3. But when we can kneel and praise God for the things He has given to us to enjoy – **there** is something.
- 4. Are they eternal things, or will they vanish when you leave this world?
- 5. It's not that the Lord doesn't sometimes give us temporary, earthly joy or happiness, but it is short-lived.
- 6. Hannah's joy was in God her salvation, and in her deliverance from her most besetting problem.

F. Listen to the joy of **the Psalmist**.

- 1. *"I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation."*
 - a. *"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: "*
 - b. *"My soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation."*
- 2. **Isaiah** expresses the joy of salvation in **61:10** –
 - a. *"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."*
 - b. This is a joy of the soul, a spiritual joy, immense in its magnitude.
 - c. It isn't a mere human or social happiness.
 - d. This joy is eternal, because it is rooted in the eternal God and His salvation.

3. The sinner saved by grace, has at his disposal, the joy that comes automatically with that salvation.
4. Sadly, many of us become sad because we too often focus on lesser things.

III. Psalm 5:11 speaks of the **JOY OF PROTECTION**.

- A. *“Let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.”*
- B. I am told there is a little bird called **Ridgewarbler** who loves to sing when it is in trouble.
1. As long as the little boy chases it or throws rocks at it, it keeps on singing.
 2. Technically, it sings in order to draw attention away from its nest and its young.
 3. But it appears to enjoy all the trouble that life throws at it.
- C. David, the penman of **Psalm 5**, was very much like the Ridgewarbler – in trouble.
1. But the key to the heart of that King was his trust in the Lord.
 2. He knew that he would be soon coming out of the tunnel and into the sunshine.
 3. The fact is, there is nothing the Devil can do to rob you of your joy when it is based in the Lord.
 - a. That joy can be **given up** by the Christian, but cannot be **stolen** from him.
 - b. *“Who shall separate us from the Love of God?”* Who shall steal our salvation?
 4. Even Satan must ask for God's permission to touch your body with disease.
 5. Lift up your hearts in joy and thanksgiving.
- D. But do we meet the qualifications for joy in this verse?
1. Is our trust in the Lord?
 - a. Is our trust in the Lord to get us over that sickness, or does it depend on the doctor and his medicines?
 - b. Is our trust in Lord – for national defense, for food on your table, and rest at night?
 2. David said that he loved the **NAME** of the Lord?
 3. Must we have the same qualifications to enjoy the same joy?
 4. Do you love the **name** of Lord? *“Let those that name the name be joyful.”*

IV. In Psalm 16:8-9 there is a powerful and wonderful scripture.

- A. *“I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.”*
- B. The right hand of God is a place of honor, power, privilege and second-best seat in the house.
1. Who is at your left hand, who sits and guards your right side and seat of your life?
 2. A lot of people save that seat for **anyone BUT Christ**.
 3. God forbid that we have let any modern heroes take that honored place.
 4. It shouldn't even be reserved for family and friends.
 5. Because they can – and will – disappoint us and even sin against us.
 6. But a real source of joy is putting Jesus at our right hand.
 7. One of the blessings of that is that He will be there when we need Him.
- C. From time to time, it seems that the Lord doesn't seem to help some folk. Why is that?
1. It's because He is not permitted to be close by at all times.
 2. And when the Lord is not there, we'll miss the opportunity for this joy.

V. And something very similar to the Lord at our right hand is the Bible on our left.

- A. **Psalm 19:7-8** – *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.”*
1. **Psalm 119:162** – *“I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil.”*

2. **Jeremiah 15:16** – *“O LORD, thou knowest: remember me, and visit me, and revenge me of my persecutors; take me not away in thy longsuffering: know that for thy sake I have suffered rebuke. Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.”*

- B. Many of us have been in the employ of others – we’ve had jobs.
1. And we’ve been somewhat dependent upon the income that those jobs have given to us.
 2. Have you ever had the joy of knowing that the boss has had direct knowledge of your work, and has taken special interest in you?
 3. Some people work as cogs in the great man’s huge machine, and that great man knows nothing of the labor or lives of his employees.
 4. But the Lord is not like that.
 5. **And** even if our service is small, His honor and blessings are great – worthy of Him and not of us.
- C. There is great joy in the study of and in obedience to the Word of Lord, God’s standard for us.
1. I won’t dwell on this right now, but the point with which I’d like to close is this –
 2. Ignoring the Word God, is like creating a thirst, but turning our backs on a drink of water.
 3. In the pages of God’s revelation are the water of life and the smile of the Lord.
 4. *“Blessed (happy) are all they that hear the words of this book and do them.”*
- D. The Bible is the only recipe for a life worth living.
1. Knock the dust off you’re your Bible, chew it up with your thoughts and meditate upon it.
 2. *“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.”*
- E. *“Do you want joy, real joy, wonderful joy, let Jesus and His word rest in your heart.”*