

**The Joy of the Lord**  
(By Rev. Anthony Menzel, March 6, 2022)

This week marks the beginning of Lent, the season of contemplation that often includes fasting which leads up to Easter or Resurrection Sunday.

Instead of talking a lot about fasting, however, I felt the Lord leading me to share about something that we need when we fast and that we need in everything we do for the Lord Jesus: the joy of the Lord.

Nehemiah 8:10

**10** Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this day is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

In order to have the strength to do God’s Will, we have to have God’s joy.

Joy is also an integral part of the character of a Christian.

Galatians 5:22-23

**22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** [g]gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. **24** And those *who are* Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. **25** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. **26** Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

In this world with so much stress and so many trials, it is easy to lose God’s joy.

John 16:33

**33** These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you [f]will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.”

Sometimes the people who hurt us the most are the people closest to us.

Matthew 10:34-39

**34** “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. **35** For I have come to ‘set[j] a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; **36** and ‘a man’s enemies *will be* those of his *own* household.’ **37** He who loves father or mother more

than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. **38** And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. **39** He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

How can we be joyful in the midst of so much pressure and frequent disappointment?

\*\*\*Our focus must be firm.

Hebrews 12:1-2

**12** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us*, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** looking unto Jesus, the [a]author and [b]finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

*We have to be focused on a goal. That goal should be the happiness of spending eternity in heaven with the Lord Jesus.*

### **The Discipline of God**

**3** For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. **4** You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. **5** And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons:

“My son, do not despise the [c]chastening of the Lord,  
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;

**6**

For whom the Lord loves He chastens,  
And scourges every son whom He receives.”

**7** If[d] you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? **8** But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. **9** Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected *us*, and we paid *them* respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? **10** For they indeed for a few days chastened *us* as seemed *best* to them, but He for *our* profit, that *we* may be partakers of His holiness. **11** Now no [e]chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

*So there will be times when God will have to correct us. But we should be happy that He is taking the time to correct us, for His correction will produce fruit in our lives.*

### **Renew Your Spiritual Vitality**

**12** Therefore strengthen the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, **13** and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be dislocated, but rather be healed.

**14** Pursue peace with all *people*, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: **15** looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; **16** lest there *be* any fornicator or [f]profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. **17** For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

*These verses talk about actions that are important for obtaining the joy of the Lord.*

\*\*\*Have realistic expectations.

You will get tired sometimes.

### **Luke 8:22-25**

**22** Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, "Let us cross over to the other side of the lake." And they launched out. **23** But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling *with water*, and were in [j]jeopardy. **24** And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. **25** But He said to them, "Where is your faith?"

And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, "Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"

Even the Lord Jesus got tired.

\*Sometimes you will get upset.

### **John 11:32-36**

**32** Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died."

**33** Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her weeping, He groaned in the spirit and was troubled. **34** And He said, “Where have you laid him?”

They said to Him, “Lord, come and see.”

**35** Jesus wept. **36** Then the Jews said, “See how He loved him!”

Even the Lord Jesus cried sometimes.

\*\*\*When you fall into negative emotions, immediately ask God to deliver you.

Ask Him to turn the negative into something positive.

Romans 8:28

**28** And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose.

For example, if someone hurts you, ask God to bless you to rejoice that you have the opportunity to suffer for Christ.

Acts 5:12-18

**12** And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. **13** Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. **14** And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, **15** so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. **16** Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

### **Imprisoned Apostles Freed**

**17** Then the high priest rose up, and all those who *were* with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with [a]indignation, **18** and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison.

It is a shame that sometimes we will get in trouble for being a blessing to people.

But the apostles didn’t give into an attitude of complaining and asking ‘why me.’

Instead they rejoiced even about their suffering.

Acts 5:26-29

**26** Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. **27** And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council. And the high priest asked them, **28** saying, “Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man’s blood on us!” **29** But Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said: “We ought to obey God rather than men.

Acts 5:33-34,40-42

**33** When they heard *this*, they were furious[g] and plotted to kill them. **34** Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. **35** And he said to them: “Men of Israel, [h]take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. **36** For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, [i]joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. **37** After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. **38** And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; **39** but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.” **40** And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. **41** So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for [j]His name. **42** And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus *as* the Christ.

Last week we talked about God’s power,  
and God does give us the power to rejoice in the midst of persecution.

Philippians 4:13

\*\*\*Make time for rest and fun when you can.

We are at war.

2 Timothy 2:1-4

**2** You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. **2** And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. **3** You therefore must endure[a] hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. **4** No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of *this* life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

But even in the midst of that war, the Lord Jesus blesses us with opportunities for rest for each part of our beings.

We get rest for our bodies from getting adequate sleep whenever possible.

Psalm 127:1-2

Unless the Lord builds the house,  
They labor in vain who build it;  
Unless the Lord guards the city,  
The watchman stays awake in vain.

**2**

*It is* vain for you to rise up early,  
To sit up late,  
To eat the bread of sorrows;  
*For* so He gives His beloved sleep.

We get rest for our souls by enjoying personal relationships.

Some people think that intimacy in a marriage is like a necessary evil. It is not. Intimacy brings joy and helps to hold the marriage together.

Proverbs 5:18-19

**18**

Let your fountain be blessed,  
And rejoice with the wife of your youth.

**19**

*As a* loving deer and a graceful doe,  
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;  
And always be [h]enraptured with her love.

Our ultimate rest is spiritual rest, which comes from spending time with the Lord Jesus. We should never cut corners in this area.

Matthew 11:28-30

**28** Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am [f]gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light.”