

THE CHRISTIAN'S JOY

Introduction

1. It is sad to see so many unhappy, anxious Christians.
2. Many are:
 - a. Like Martha, worried about many things (Luke 10:38-42)
 - b. Like the thorny ground, many allow the cares of this world to choke out the word of God. (Luke 8:14).
 - c. We get so caught up in the evil or other unpleasant things around us that we find it difficult to be joyful at any time throughout the day.
3. But the Christian who has set his/her heart on the things of God will be able to find joy in spite of the many hardships of this life.
4. We will look at some of the factors that contribute to the happiness of God's people.

Discussion

I. Hope

- A. A faithful Christian knows that this life is not all there is to his existence.
 1. We look to Christ for salvation because we know that there will be a judgment and that the condition of our souls on that day will determine our eternal outcome.
 2. The faith that is delivered to us through the word of God shows us the glory that awaits us if we are faithful to God and we can take joy as we look forward to that glory.
 3. As it says in 1 Thess. 4:17-18, "*Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words.*"
- B. A Christian's hope rests on his faith.
 1. It is not enough to simply acknowledge the promises of God.
 2. The glory that awaits us must be on our minds throughout the day.
 3. As we face the day-to-day trials of this life we must look to Jesus who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross (Heb. 12:2).
 4. We must put our trust, our desire, and our energy into attaining that joy.
 5. When we are able to do this then the evils of this life will not seem so burdensome. "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us*" (Rom. 8:18).

II. Contentment

- A. It is very difficult to find joy when we are never satisfied with what we already have.

1. If we are always looking for something better, something different, something newer, then we will never be able to stop and enjoy what the Lord has blessed us with now.
 2. In order to be able to experience the joy that is characteristic of God's people we must learn to be satisfied with such things as God has blessed us now (Heb. 13:5).
- B. Our contentment must be a result our faith in God and in His promises.
1. Paul said that he was able to be content in whatever state he was in (Phil. 4:11-12).
 2. How was he able to do this? He said in verse 13, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*"
 3. When our trust is in Christ, when our hope is in Christ, when we learn to rely on Christ for our spiritual strength at any given moment then we too can learn to be content as Paul was.
 4. As we put the kind of faith in the hope that God offers, as Paul did, then we will be content with whatever we have in this life, knowing that we have something far greater awaiting us.
 5. When we can be content in this manner then we can allow our minds to move away from our wants and desires and focus on all that we have to be joyful for.
 6. I do not hold much to reading emails in my sermons, but there was one that expressed something which all should consider. It said something like...
 - a. In stead of complaining about doing the dishes, be thankful that you have food with which to make the dishes dirty.
 - b. In stead of complaining about having to do the laundry, be thankful that there are people you love to make the laundry dirty. Etc.
 7. We have much to be joyful for if we just open our eyes and learn to appreciate it.
 8. Godliness with contentment is great gain (1 Tim. 6:6).
 - a. That is, godly character that seeks God and His kingdom first and leaves the rest to God.
 - b. As Paul went on to say in 1 Tim. 6:7-9, when we desire more than what we already have, it means that our hearts are set on the things of this world.
 - c. If that is the case then all that awaits us is turmoil, because all we love will be lost.
 9. We if want to know true joy, we must learn to be content.
- C. The Christian can be content knowing His Lord will never forsake him (Heb. 13:5).

III. Dedication

- A. Dedication and diligences provides a reason to be joyful.
 1. A person who strives for nothing can take joy in nothing.

2. But a person who labors can take joy in the fruit of his labor. The Preacher said this is the gift of God in Eccl. 3:13.
- B. Dedication to God brings about supreme happiness even in this life.
1. When we are dedicated to serving God we can take joy in knowing that our labors are not in vain; that they will result in eternal life (as discussed in the subject of hope).
 2. It says in 1 Cor. 15:58, *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”*
 3. But we can take joy in the things of this life as well.
 - a. Those who are dedicated to the kingdom of heaven rejoice whenever a soul is won over to God. We rejoice in this with the hosts of heaven.
 - b. When we labor diligently for God and for our brethren we can rejoice in every victory that we experience.
 - c. We can rejoice when good things happen to us and to our brethren.
 - d. We can rejoice when we sing, when we pray, when we study God’s word, and when we do all of these things together because these are the things that mean so much to us.

Conclusion

1. But this can only be said of those who are dedicated to serving God and His kingdom.
2. Are you dedicated?
3. Those outside of Christ need to obey His gospel in order to attain the happiness that can only be found in Him (Rom. 6:3-4). Are you willing receive joy from the Lord?

July, 2006

Avondale church of Christ
1606 Glen Willow Rd., P.O. Box 421, Avondale, PA 19311
Phone: (610) 268-2088
Email: info@avondalechristians.com
Website: www.avondalechristians.com

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