

SPEAKING ABOUT JOY

“We write this to make your joy complete.” -- 1 John 1:4

Happiness, as described by many, has lot of particulars. It is tried, searched and researched by many and different kinds of people. Some speak about the methods and ways while others picture or proclaim their own or other's experiences as:

Picture 1: *A cowboy riding on a horse with expensive cigar in his mouth*

Picture 2: *A well-dressed beautiful lady standing beside a red luxurious car*

Picture 3: *A smart man sharing a dinner table with an attractive woman*

Picture 4: *A family in their well-furnished house visited by famous friends*

Picture 5: *A man on the platform surrounded by a large crowd cheering*

Picture 6: *A Husband and wife with their children playing in the beach*

These are the pictures of most people that have reached happiness by external changes and world events. And human should toil to gain happiness as described. If you believe that any of the above pictures is a state of happiness, you have to work hard to attain one. So, search for a beautiful girl, fill your pocket with money, go to an expensive place to stay and imagine happiness! Do you want another option? You take a big loan from the bank, buy a beautiful car, rent a well-furnished house to live and presume happiness! If this is difficult, I can give you another option. You practice riding a horse and after you master riding, light your cigar that spoils your chest and be in happiness! To get a horse is much easier than buying a car. So this option is less expensive than any other options, but it needs more physical effort.

What I mentioned are not jokes but these are the ways the world around us depict happiness. “You have to toil much and hard to reach happiness, because nothing will come to you easy.” This is the happiness of the world: daring, far-reaching, and full of temptations.

Whatever is described, it may bring happiness but as well it may not. Even if it brings, it would be only a temporary state or would last only for a short time. And it may be as well a source of sadness and grief. I do believe situations like those mentioned are unworthy presentations of happiness or joy. Some of us did experience the above but have come to know it is meaningless. Many of us did not experience such condition but have reached the true happiness or joy, “the joy greater than what the world can give.” No material thing in this world can give you real joy and no worldly happenings can make you really happy.

But the Bible speaks about the source, the reason, and the hope of eternal joy that we write to you. Whatever joy or happiness you may have, unless it is from the Lord, it will not last long; it will not be present in difficult times, and it will not be there in times of need. From the Gospels we will review three occasions that speak about joy:

1. ***The source of our joy:*** At the time of Jesus' birth, the angels said to the shepherds who are keeping watch over their flocks at night: **“Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord.”** (Luke 2: 10-11) Even for the poor people who lack many things, like those shepherds, Jesus is their Saviour from sin, poverty, sickness and non-respect.

He does not make them rich but He makes them indifferent or unconcerned to their situations. With Jesus, those who believe in Him will become above-reproach and away from condemnation. With Jesus, they who received Him, their guilt feelings will be removed, and their poverty will be honored. In the hearts of these people, Jesus is the source of continuous and unfading joy. He is Jesus, the Son of God; He who lived with the people as a man, did miracles, and died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins. He is Jesus, the source of our great joy.

2. ***The hope of our Joy:*** After Jesus' death on the cross, He was buried in a tomb, and on the third day when the women went to the tomb, they found it empty. **“There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said.” So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.”** (Matthew 28:2, 5, 6, 8) Jesus, before His death has proclaimed that He will rise from the dead on the third day and it was so. The resurrection means the fulfillment of His promise, **“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.”** (John 11:25) Thereby, Jesus is the hope our real joy, the hope of eternal life.

3. ***The reason for our joy:*** After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to many and He made many miracles. He appeared to the disciples, **“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.” When He had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, He lifted up his hands, and blessed them. While He was blessing them, He left them and was taken up into heaven. Then they worshiped Him and returned with great joy.”** (Luke 24:45-48, 50-52) Witnessing Jesus taken up into Heaven was a joyful experience. But to understand His words and His promises will make us more joyful. Jesus said, **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”** (John 14:1-3) This is the reason for our joy even while we are in hard times and sufferings.

My dear and beloved: Are you longing for that peace and real joy in your heart? I urge you in the name of Jesus to turn your face away from the temptations of this world, which will never give you joy. Focus your eyes on Jesus and surrender your life to Him, as you pray this prayer from your heart: **“Father God, help me in this life. Take me out from my sadness and suffering. I believe in You, Lord Jesus. You are the source, the hope and the reason for my joy in Life. I believe in Your death on the cross, in Your resurrection from death, in Your ascension to heaven, and in Your promise to come again. Help me to be ready for your coming. Refresh me Lord and shine on me with your great love and compassion. This is my prayer in Jesus' name,” Amen.**