

Proclaiming the Gospel

Message
of
Jesus Christ

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. 1.18).

Edifying the Body of Christ (Eph. 4.10-16)

July, 2014

The Wise Still Seek Him

Vol. VI.07

The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength

Life, I fear, has become laborious for many who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Satan has come to steal our joy, the joy of the Lord, as he has come to bring upon us diseases, discouragement, and hardship. However, my understanding is that the Persecuted Church, though horrendously persecuted, has not lost their joy, but is much like the apostles in Acts 5.41 who rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name."

How often have I experienced my joy gone! Joy is from deep within and cannot be taken from us without our permission. When we are lethargic and have no life of the Lord flowing in us from deep within, we have gone too long in our own strength. We must realize we have no strength except that of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who believe in Jesus Christ, those walking with Him daily, will be in the Word daily, will be full of joy, **but will be encountered by the enemy.** It is said that if you did not meet Satan today, you are walking with him. We need to open the Word of the Lord daily that we shall be strengthened and full of the joy of the Lord – which is our strength.

Take time to list that which stands between you and the Savior. Many times we are filled with grief or other things that deplete our lives. There are experiences that come our way, which Satan sends to us from even family and friends, that are meant to destroy us. John's Gospel makes it clear.

The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: [Jesus said] I am come that they might have life . . .(Jn 10.10).

When we have been on the verge of the Lord requiring more of us in serving Him, we have experienced more battles coming our way. Not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, is of the Lord. Matthew 7.20-23 is significant as is Romans 16.17.

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

We must stop and seek the Lord immediately when the enemy comes in to discourage us. We must arise in the Lord and walk in obedience. Stop what you are doing and open the Bible and read from the Psalms such as 134. Begin blessing the Lord for His wonderful works and blessings in your life. Begin praising Him for your salvation, that He died on the Cross of Calvary for your sins, that He rose from the grave, and that you have victory over sin, hell, and the grave. Begin thanking Him for His presence in your life, for His glory, for His love, for His provision in your life, and for His life in you, the hope of glory (Col. 1.27).

Then begin asking Him what it is that He wants of you. Respond to the Lord with Isaiah, "...**Here am I; send me**" (Isa 6.8).

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

Seek discernment of the voice of the Lord (Jn 10.4, 5). Pray daily that the Lord will give you eyes to behold His glory, ears fine-tuned as an instrument to the hearing of His voice, and His voice alone, and a heart that is melded with His that you shall walk in obedience to Him.

The joy of the Lord is your strength; we are to rejoice in the Lord as the Bible teaches; it is serving Him with a heart of thanksgiving. Paul wrote in I Thessalonians 5.18, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” This will give you strength from the Lord that you might walk in obedience to all that He calls you to do for His glory. We need His strength in our spirits, our bodies, our minds that we might walk on with him, that we might stand firm against the enemy as the enemy comes in to oppose the work of the Lord.

When the enemy comes in, he can weaken our bodies and our spirits making us easy prey to the enemy and all who would come against us. When the enemy comes in and weakens us, we are weakened in our spirit as well as in our body and in our mind; our heart cannot be melded with the heart of the Lord when we are weakened.

Spend more time with the Lord! Be in the Holy Word; worship the Lord daily, and pray always; you will know the joy of the Lord and know that the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Read the Psalms and see how King David rejoiced in the Lord God. Yes, he admitted his feelings and his discouragements, but he did not stay there. He asked, “Why is my soul cast down?” on more than one occasion; yet, he came always to rejoice in the God of his salvation (Ps 42.11).

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?

hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, [who is] the health of my countenance, and my God.

The enemy has come to steal our joy. How many “churches” sing the songs of Zion, those old hymns which give forth the Word from the Bible? How many sing, “When we all get to heaven . . .” “Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine . . .” “Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior . . .” “Sweet Hour of Prayer. . . .”?

People are living in doubt because they have chosen to follow the enemy, the world, and go to “churches” that make one *feel* good. They have chosen to abide by the world’s word and not The Word of the Lord, The Holy Bible. There are those parachurches who want people to believe they have remained

faithful, but when I see them using a “version” of the Bible that lessens the life in the Word, reduces it to nothing, changes it to make people *feel* good, I cringe that there are those *playing* with the Holy Bible.

The world today is about making you feel good about yourself and assuring you that whatever you do is just fine. The world and the “churches” that follow Satan’s ways are distracting you from the Lord, from walking with the Lord Jesus Christ and rejoicing in Him and what He has done for you on the Cross of Calvary. Satan has come to steal your joy by deceiving you into thinking that you are happy when you are doing what **you** want to do that makes **you** feel good about **yourself**.

True joy comes from the Lord, from worshiping Him, praising Him, walking in obedience to Him. The joy of the Lord, the joy we can have in Christ Jesus, is our strength.

Paul writes in Philippians 4.4, “Rejoice in the Lord alway: *[and]* again I say, Rejoice.” Then in I Thessalonians 5.16, “Rejoice evermore.”

When we fall in love with the Lord and live for Him, seeking His will in our lives, we can walk on – come what may. But, our eyes must be upon the Lord. If we, like Peter desiring to walk on the water to Jesus, take our eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ, we will begin sinking into the sea. It is when we take our eyes off Jesus that the enemy steals our joy.

We must have the strength of the Lord to carry on the ministry to which He has called us. We must begin seeing and experiencing His glory, His presence, His love that calls us to a deeper walk with Him, that strengthens us.

We need to be obedient to Proverbs 3.5-6:

Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

If we are trusting the Lord with all our heart, we will trust Him in the valleys as well as on the mountain tops. We will begin seeing the hand of the Lord in our lives in the valleys as well as on the mountain tops.

Pray, seeking to be discerning more quickly when the enemy comes in like a flood, knowing the Spirit of God shall lift up a standard against him.

...When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. (Isa 59.19).

I am reminded of the battle Nehemiah encountered as he obeyed the Lord in the rebuilding of the wall. In the midst of the battle, he was able to say and live, “The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Neh 8.10).