

“DANCING AND DESPISING”

Proper 10B July 12, 2009

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-10 Ephesians 1:3-14

Introduction:

There is power in joy. Unfortunately, not everyone is emotionally equipped to be joyful.

Yet joy is one of the Fruits of the Spirit, and is intended by God to be part of every Christian's life. So,

What is Joy?

In the Holman Bible Dictionary article on Joy, Robert Dean states the following:

***JOY** is the happy state that results from knowing and serving God.... nearly synonymous words are joy, happiness, pleasure, delight, gladness, merriment, felicity, and enjoyment. The words joy, rejoice, joyous, joyful, in both noun and verb form are found over 400 times in the Bible. Having joy is a big deal with God!*

Joy is the fruit of a right relation with God. It is not something people can create by their own efforts. The Bible distinguishes joy from pleasure. The Greek word for pleasure is the word from which we get our word hedonism, the philosophy of self-centered pleasure-seeking. Paul referred to false teachers as “lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God” (2 Tim. 3:4).

The Bible warns that self-indulgent pleasure-seeking does not lead to happiness and fulfillment.

DANCING AND DESPISING

Ecclesiastes 2:1-11 records the sad testimony of one who sought to build his life on pleasure-seeking. The search left him empty and disillusioned. Proverbs 14:13 offers insight into this way of life, “Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful.” Cares, riches, and pleasures rob people of the possibility of fruitful living (Luke 8:14). Pleasure seeking often enslaves people in a vicious cycle of addiction (Tit. 3:3). The self-indulgent person, according to 1 Timothy 5:6, is dead while seeming still to be alive.

Many people think that God is the great Kill-Joy. Nothing could be a bigger lie. God Himself knows joy, and He wants His people to know joy. Psalm 104:31 speaks of God Himself rejoicing in His creative works. Isaiah 65:18 speaks of God rejoicing over His redeemed people who will be to Him “a joy.”

Luke 15 is the most famous biblical reference to God’s joy. The Pharisees and scribes had criticized Jesus for receiving sinners and eating with them. Then Jesus told three parables—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the loving father. The explicit theme of each parable is joy over one sinner who repents.

The joy of God came to focus in human history in Jesus Christ. The note of joy and exultation runs through

DANCING AND DESPISING

the entire biblical account of the coming of Christ (Luke 1:14, 44; Matt. 2:10). The most familiar passage is the angel's announcement of "good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (Luke 2:10). Jesus spoke of His own joy and of the full joy He had come to bring to others (John 15:11; 17:13). He illustrated the kingdom of heaven by telling of the joy of a man who found treasure (Matt. 13:44). Zacchaeus was in a tree when Jesus called him, but he quickly climbed down and received Jesus joyfully (Luke 19:6). He had found life's ultimate treasure in Christ.

As Jesus' death approached, He told His followers that soon they would be like a woman in labor, whose sorrow would be turned into joy (John 16:20-22). Later they understood, when the dark sorrow of the cross gave way to the joy of the resurrection (Luke 24:41). Viewed from this perspective, eventually they came to see that the cross itself was necessary for the joy to become real (Heb. 12:2). Because of His victory and the promise of His abiding presence, the disciples could rejoice even after the Lord's ascension (Luke 24:52).

The Book of Acts tells how joy continued to characterize those who followed Jesus. After Philip

DANCING AND DESPISING

preached in Samaria, the people believed and “there was great joy in that city” (Acts 8:8). After the work of Paul and Barnabas in Antioch of Pisidia, “the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 13:52). Paul and Barnabas reported such conversions to other believers, “and they caused great joy unto all the brethren” (Acts 15:3). After the conversion of the Philippian jailer, he “rejoiced, believing in God with all his house” (Acts 16:34).

Joy in the Christian life is in direct proportion as believers walk with the Lord. They can rejoice because they are in the Lord (Phil. 4:4). Joy is a fruit of a Spirit-led life (Gal. 5:22). Sin in a believer’s life robs the person of joy (Ps. 51:8, 12).

When a person walks with the Lord, the person can continue to rejoice even when troubles come. Jesus spoke of those who could rejoice even when persecuted and killed (Matt. 5:12). Paul wrote of rejoicing in suffering because of the final fruit that would result (Rom. 5:3-5). Both Peter and James also echoed the Lord’s teachings about rejoicing in troubles (1 Pet. 1:6-8; Jas. 1:2).

Joy in the Lord enables people to enjoy all that God has given. They rejoice in family (Prov. 5:18), food (1 Tim. 4:4-5), celebrations (Deut. 16:13-15), and fellowship (Phil.

4:1). *They share with other believers the joys and sorrows of life: “Rejoice with them that do rejoice, weep with them that weep” (Rom. 12:15).* Robert J. Dean

Yet, in spite of God’s desire that believers be joyful, some are simply not able emotionally to free themselves to receive joy; or, not able to believe people should be joyful; or, just do not like to be joyful.

Some People Dance in God’s Presence and Some Despise The Dancers.

In our lesson from 2 Samuel, we read about a time of joy in the Lord that resulted in both dancing and despising.

King David was bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. For years it had resided in the private houses of Abinadab and Obed-edom. Now, it was time to bring God’s presence back to the people.

As the Ark was carried through the countryside, King David – and all the house of Israel – danced before the Lord with all their might, playing all the musical instruments available to them.

As they entered the City of David, every six steps David would sacrifice an Ox and a fatling calf; and “David danced before the Lord with all his might”.

DANCING AND DESPISING

As the joyful procession came within sight of King David's palace, his wife, Michal – the daughter of King Saul, whom David won when he killed Goliath – was looking out one of the windows. She “saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.”

Dancing and Despising – all in one picture. Some people know that the “Joy of the Lord is their strength”, and they are not embarrassed or ashamed to show the joy of their salvation. Others are limited in the joy they are able to display because of their personality, or in the case of Michael because of personal issues with the one displaying the joy. Who knows? Maybe Michael was in love with someone else when her father gave her to David? Maybe she was embarrassed because she thought that her husband, the King, was making a fool of himself in his display of joy before God? Maybe she blamed her father and brother's deaths on David? Maybe she was mad at God? Whatever the reason, she despised David for his joy in the Lord.

The question, then, is

Which Will You Choose – to Be Joyful, or Resentful?

DANCING AND DESPISING

On the Internet this week was a story with this punch line: *“Life is not about waiting for the storms of life to pass. It is about learning to dance in the rain”*. The joy of the Lord in us gives us the strength to dance in the midst of the storm. It is a choice we make. God wants us to live in the joy being provided for us in Jesus Christ, and not despise those who do.

Hear some verses from the Bible discussing Joy:

Nehemiah 8:10c - Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

Psalm 5:11 - But let all who take refuge in you be glad; let the ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Psalm 30:11 - You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,

Psalm 68:3 - But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.

Psalm 81:1a - Sing for joy to God our strength;

Psalm 94:19 - When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.

Acts 2:28 - ²⁸ You have made known to me the paths of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence.’

DANCING AND DESPISING

Romans 14:17 - ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ...

Romans 15:13 - ¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 5:16 - ¹⁶Be joyful always;

Hebrews 12:2 - ²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

From our lesson in Ephesians, we find this blessing which reminds us that God has provided us everything we need to be joyful and successful in this world: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”*