



The reality of Christian Joy

Throughout the bible we see that the people of God are a people who are established in joy. What is declared is that whatever the circumstances – whatever the situation God's people have an inner joy that undergirds and strengthens them!!

Discuss

Q. Do you believe in Christian joy? If so why? if not why not?

Q. What do you think this Christian joy is?

Q. Can you testify to any situations that you have been through (where they have been difficult) and you still have had a sense of joy?

For many people today the idea of joy is seen as an emotional response of happiness, delight, well being that is dependant upon your circumstances and how you feel emotionally about those circumstances. Therefore for many the root of joy is circumstantial and emotional. The problem with this is that circumstances and emotions change and therefore joy is a transient thing that does not last.

However the bible tells us that Christian joy is a real core reality that is not dependent upon your circumstances, but is established by the work of the Holy Spirit within your life.

There are a number of ways that Christian Joy is different from the joy of the world:-

1) Christian Joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and is a condition of one's being rather than a emotion!
(**Read** Galatians 5 v 22, Romans 14 v 17)

2) Christian Joy is not dependent upon circumstances, but upon a person's life in Christ. The reality of joy is that it is all about the fact that in Jesus we have found life's true treasure and that from now on our lives our hid in Him. It surrounds the whole idea of assurance of salvation and that nothing can snatch us out of His hand. The simple truth that even suffering and death is not the end for in Christ there is resurrection – New Life and real Rewards for faithful service. (Whatever the circumstances we go through.)

Discuss

Q. Do you think that is truly possible to have joy in all circumstances? If so Why? If not why not?

Q. How do you think we can cultivate this sort of lasting joy in our lives?

3) Jesus makes it clear that he is the one who will give His disciples Joy. He will minister to us a Joy which no-one, not even circumstances can take away. **John 16 v 20 – 22**. This whole reality of lasting joy is based upon the fact that by faith we are made alive in Christ. **Philippians 4 v 3b – 4**

Because Christian Joy is not dependent on circumstances, but on Christ, Christians are commanded to rejoice in the Lord always. **Read** – Luke 10 v 20, John 15 v 11, James 1 v 2, **1 Peter 1 v 3 – 9**. This capacity to rejoice in suffering (1 Corinthians 13 v 9) and in weakness (2 Corinthians 13 v 9) is the result of the Spirit's continued reassurance to you and me of God's love and faithfulness to us. There is that inner conviction that whatever we go through on a personal level that God can use even the difficulties and suffering for the long term good both for you and me and also His Kingdom. (**Read** – Romans 5 v 3 – 5, Romans 8 v 28)

For many Christians when they go through difficult times often the first things that seem to drop away is a sense of peace and joy. Many Christians struggle to keep their relationship with God constant and keep their focus on Jesus by worshipping Him and reminding themselves of His promises. Jesus in many passages found in the Gospels, calls Christians to come to him when they are weary and heavy-laden. He makes it clear that God's desire is to be a Good Father who knows our needs before we ask and is willing to minister to our lives if we would but turn to Him and admit our needs honestly.

Discuss –

Q. Why do you think many Christians run away from God in difficult time rather than to Him?

Q. How do you think we can encourage each other when one of us is struggling in this area?

Quote “ The adversity of problems which destroy earthly happiness are like obstacles that causes the stream of joy to rush and raise up around them from some deep spring - to swell the tide of joy in the breast of the children of God.”
Read John 16 v 33, Romans 5 v 3 – 11