

The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength

by Carter Conlon

The joy of the Lord is a deep and abiding presence of God that is not based on circumstance or surrounding, but is rooted in a deep inward embracing of truth.

Duration: 54:00

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:8, Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 6:5, Matthew 6:33, Luke 15:7-8, Romans 5:8

Topics: "Joy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Paul and Silas in prison and how God miraculously set them free. The earthquake that shook the prison opened all the doors and loosed the prisoners' bands. The prison keeper, fearing punishment, was about to kill himself, but Paul stopped him and assured him that everyone was still there. The prison keeper, moved by this display of God's power, asked Paul what he needed to do to be saved. The preacher emphasizes the joy that comes from knowing the mercy of God and the depth of salvation in Jesus Christ. He also highlights the importance of the preaching of God's Word, which exposes our unrighteousness and leads to repentance. The sermon concludes with a message of revival and the promise of the Spirit of God breaking forth in a special way.

Transcript

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Holy Spirit, I invite you to come tonight and give life to the words that I'm about to speak that you put upon my heart and give an absolute revelation of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Lord, it's all about you. Your life, your breath, your strength, your salvation.

You're our hope for today. You're our sustaining strength. You're everything.

Lord, as I open this word tonight, oh God, I ask that the revelation of Christ be given to those who are poor in spirit. That you open prison doors. Heal those that have been bruised in heart.

Set the captives free. Lord, heal those that are sick in body. As your word goes forth, I ask that you stretch forth your hand to heal.

Heal families, sons and daughters that are here tonight that are backslidden in heart. Touch them. Father, I ask in Jesus' name with an irresistible touch from heaven that they cannot turn away from.

Lord, fight against our enemies, those that are oppressed of darkness. I ask, oh God, that you withdraw your right hand and show your strength and scatter our enemies a thousand ways, oh God. Lord, your word says clearly there's going to be a highway and the redeemed of the Lord shall walk on that road and everlasting joy will be upon their heads.

Lord, I thank you for that joy. The sustaining joy of the Lord. God, teach us tonight, speak to us through your word.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. If you'll go in the Old Testament, please, to the book of Nehemiah.

Chapter 8. The joy of the Lord is your strength. Hallelujah. The joy of the Lord is your strength.

Now, in Nehemiah, chapter 8, we're at a time when Israel is being brought back. The children of God are being brought back again from captivity. Ezra has come to restore the temple and Nehemiah is restoring the wall.

If we were to liken it to today's church age that we're living in, it would be as if somebody has come to reestablish the perimeters, I suppose, of where God's safety and protection are and to build a people, a temple that's fitly framed, growing together into a holy temple in the Lord. That's the desire of God's heart. He yearns for a place where He can dwell, where there's absolute joy, where the people know Him and He knows the people, where He can manifest His presence and His glory.

Now, Nehemiah, chapter 8, beginning at verse 8. Now, during this revival, Ezra and those that were helping him opened the book of the Lord and they made known the words of the book unto the people. In other words, they spoke it in a way, they, first of all, translated it into the language that the people spoke, and secondly, they spoke it in a way that the people could understand the sense of what God was speaking. Nothing more troubling than to be in a place where the preacher preaches in a manner that you can't understand what he's talking about.

Maybe he's impressed with his own ability or knowledge. I remember sitting as a younger Christian in places where I couldn't make heads nor tails out of what the man behind the pulpit was saying. And I think those experiences have always put it in my heart to speak in a way that the least understood, the person with the least understanding can clearly understand the sense of what God is trying to speak through His Word.

Because the Word of the Lord is for everybody in all circumstances of life. And in verse 8, the Scripture says, So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them, that's the people, to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, which is the Tershatha, and Ezra the priest, the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day is holy unto the Lord your God.

Mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.

For this day is holy unto you, O Lord. Neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day is holy, neither be ye grieved.

And all the people went their way to eat and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them. Now the revival under Ezra and Nehemiah was a revival of truth. Wherever there is truth proclaimed, in a way that people both understand and desire to apply to their lives, you're going to have revival.

You're going to have the Spirit of God, the manifested presence of Christ in our generation is going to break forth upon such a people in a new and a very, very special way. In verse 8 again, it says, They read in the book of the law, and gave the sense, and caused the people to understand the reading. Now initially, when the people heard the word of God, there was great sorrow when they realized how far they had fallen away from God.

We have to first know the love of God. When we know the love of God, and understand how much He cares about us, then there's a sense of loss, a sense of sorrow that comes in the heart of everyone who loves Christ, and hears His word, and realizes how far that they've fallen away from Him. However, also contained within God's word is an absolute, incredible revelation of His everlasting mercy towards those who turn to Him in truth.

He is merciful. He will forgive. He will save.

He will strengthen. Listen to the words of the psalmist David in Psalm 30. He said, O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and Thou hast healed me.

O Lord, Thou hast brought up my soul from the grave. Thou hast kept me alive that I should not go down to the pit. Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of His, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness.

For His anger endures for but a moment. In His favor is life. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes again in the morning.

Hallelujah. Many, many people in this generation, they pursue joy. I think virtually everybody, if you were to leave this sanctuary tonight and go out into the streets of New York City, the people who are out there are pursuing joy.

Everybody wants to be happy. They want to be relieved of the pressures of this life. They want to have hope for the future.

Many, many are seeking it though through sensory experience. Superficial, if I call it mutual, urgings to just be happy. That's people running around saying, don't worry, be happy.

Getting t-shirts that say things like that. Just be happy. You know, lay down your problems and go to conventions where they urge one another to think positively and don't dwell on the fact that the world is going to blow up.

Think positively. Be happy. And even in the church, joy is sought in a similar manner.

Joy is sought in convention settings where people go and gather together and they have heartwarming interpersonal experiences. There's nothing wrong with that, but you can get that in the world too. You don't have to go to the church to get that.

They go to conventions where they hold hands and sway back and forth and sing we love you, I love you, you love me, we're, you're nice, I'm nice, everybody's happy and everybody's wonderful. And they go away from that. I'm not against that, but it's so superficial and it won't last if truth is not in it.

Truth has got to be at the core of the joy that only God can give because all other forms of joy are superficial. You feel good while you're there, but isn't it funny when you leave the convention and you go and drive your car in the middle of New York City, all of a sudden, I don't love you anymore and you don't love me anymore and I'm not happy and you're not happy anymore and all of a sudden everything changes you're, all of a sudden you're not reaching your hand out your car window at an intersection to grab somebody's hand but you're making other gestures towards people that are not nearly as nice and you're threatening with your fist and doing all of these kind of things and, you see, because that kind of joy is sensory. It's limited to the moment and it has, I suppose, some value to it, but if it isn't grounded in truth it's not going to last.

Usually these conventions are chaired by light motivational speakers. People who get up and tell jokes or people who get up and they don't have a whole lot of depth to them and they just throw continuous platitudes at the people about how wonderful they are and they build up self and all of these types of things and send everybody out happy. Everybody's got to be happy and everybody goes out the door and they're determined.

I've been in places like that that call themselves Christian over the years and you're determined to be happy. The only problem is it just doesn't last. The joy is all on the outside and it's all based on lightness and then when you get into the reality of what we have to face in life it doesn't last because it's not a deep abiding presence of Christ that is the only really true lasting joy.

Now the joy that Jesus speaks about in the Scriptures is not superficial and it's not sensory. It's not a sensory joy that must be continuously and artificially maintained by some outward experience and you'll find many, many people who are talking about living the overcoming victorious life you'll find them continuously having to run to somewhere to be reinforced that they are in fact living the overcoming victorious life.

They have a deep seated reliance on sensory experience and outward, some kind of an outward stimuli to tell them that they're doing okay that everybody else is doing okay then they go back out and they're again convinced that they have this joy but the joy doesn't last and some of you may have come in as visitors tonight and you've run this gambit and you've traveled this path and you're weary tonight you're this endless seeking of joy even in the house of God and you say if that's all there is and many people get to that place they say if that's all there is then the whole thing is a fraud or I've got a hold of the wrong end of the stick something is wrong because I want something I need something I'm searching for something that's going to last that's not dependent on what's going on

around me I want a joy that the world can't give me and that the world can't take out of my life I want something more than just superficial experiences and somebody telling me that I should be happy I want a deep abiding joy in my life that even in the midst of trial and difficulty and tribulation it will carry me this joy will sustain me it's something that's beyond just a feeling of happiness it's a deep abiding presence of God it's what I yearn for it's what I need in my life as a matter of fact it's the only joy that will get you and I through in the coming days in John chapter 16 verse 22 Jesus is speaking to his disciples he was about to be crucified he was about to be taken away and he was telling them that you're going to know a bit of

sorrow but in John 16, 22 he says, but I

will see you again and your heart shall rejoice and your joy now this is the joy that Jesus gives he was about to give it to his disciples and it's no less the joy that he gives to those who follow him in this generation he says in your joy no man take it from you in other words the joy that I give is not dependent on circumstance the joy that I give is not dependent on going home to a house where everything is alright and there are no battles to fight the joy that I give is not dependent on going to your workplace and everybody loves you and you get the promotion you always wanted and everything is just fine in your life no, he's saying I'm going to give you a joy that nobody can take from you no circumstance can take it out of your life no situation will lessen it it's more than the

world can give it's deeper than anything that any sensory experience will ever give you I'm going to give you a joy that is so much deeper it's not based on circumstance it's not based on surrounding man didn't give it and man can't take it away it's a joy that's based on a deep inward embracing of truth I believe and I say I believe because it's my conviction that in the last day because Jesus spoke about in the scriptures there is going to come a separation of the wise and the foolish they're all mixed in together and everybody is talking about being joyful and everybody is talking about the joy of the Lord and the strength of God but all of a sudden almost overnight there's a separation and the foolish begin to know that they're foolish there's a distinction something happens now, the

prophet Joel in speaking of the last days which we are living in he says the vine is dried up the fig tree languishes the pomegranate tree the palm tree also the apple tree even all the trees in the field are withered in other words all solace all comfort everything that this world has had to offer is gone it's dried up he says because joy is withered away from the sons of men the sons of men those who really don't know God it's going to become evident even in the house of the Lord those who belong to the Lord and those who don't look at the book of Isaiah please with me I just want to further this before we go on Isaiah chapter 24 Isaiah speaks of the last day the days that we're living in in Isaiah chapter 24 at the beginning of the chapter he talks about the Lord making the earth empty

and turning it upside down and scattering abroad the inhabitants of the world in other words the entire established order is going to be changed there's going to be distress among nations now, in verse 11 he says there is a crying for wine in the streets all joy you see that there? now that's not talking about the joy of the Lord that's not talking about the joy that Jesus gives but every other joy all joy is darkened the mirth of the land is gone in other words all the superficial joys all the sensory experiences all of these things are gone virtually in a day I tell you brother and sister if nuclear bombs hit North America tomorrow you better hope that you have the real joy because all of a sudden there's not going to be any more jokers the jokers will have nothing more to say that

stood in the pulpits the ones that stand and tell the people just feel good about yourself are not going to have anything to tell the people anymore all superficial all false joy the whole thing will be gone closed shut down in a day by God Almighty Himself because He will overturn it and expose it for what it is it's the joy of the sons of men and it will all of a sudden be gone absolutely eradicated there's crying for wine all joy is darkened the mirth of the land is gone verse 12 says in thee is left desolation and the gate is smitten with destruction when thus it shall be in the midst of the land among the people there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree and as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done they shall lift up their voice they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord

they shall cry aloud from the sea in other words there's going to be a people even in the midst of this calamity their joy has not been based on anything that this world has got to offer it's not been superficial they have found the true source of everlasting joy they have laid hold of it it's been birthed in their inward parts and even when all these things begin to happen there's a people who will begin to lift up their heads because their redemption draweth nigh they've not been looking to this world to satisfy any needs in their life they've not been looking to the things superficial things of the superficial church age we live in to placate consciences that are distant from God they have been living for God they love God with all of their hearts they're not surprised when these

things begin to happen they haven't been looking to the world for joy and for satisfaction hallelujah verse 14 says they shall lift up their voice I believe that's what the distinction's going to be that's what the drawing line's going to be in the midst of calamity they're going to be a people that just explode in God hallelujah the presence of Christ is magnified in their lives they know that soon and very soon we're going to see the King hallelujah they know the spirit of God bears witness and they rise up even in the midst of the fires and begin to glorify God with an inward strength that the world didn't give them and the world can't take it away hallelujah they shall lift up their voice they shall sing for the majesty of the Lord they shall cry aloud from the sea hallelujah

wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fire even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea in the midst of the isles in the midst of the fire in the midst of the trial there's a people going to rise up that are going to know Him and going to glorify Him from the uttermost part of the earth we have heard songs this is Isaiah speaking now of our day we have heard songs even from the uttermost part of the earth even glory to the righteous if Isaiah knew the name he'd even say even in New York City even in that terrible city way down in the isles of the sea I hear songs in the last hour of time in the midst of trial in the midst of fire God has a people God has found a dwelling place Christ has manifested His presence in the midst of a people that have been seeking Him in truth

hallelujah I want to share with you what the Lord has spoken to my heart about what joy really is now I don't have the time to go into great depth into any one of these things but I want you to see some things hallelujah joy the joy that Jesus speaks about is the joy of the knowledge of the absolute mercy of God and the indescribable depth of our salvation in Jesus Christ hallelujah it is seeing ourselves in the light of God's word in the day of Nehemiah the book was opened the word was preached and the people began to weep just like Isaiah when Isaiah was lifted up into the presence of God he said woe unto me I am undone there's an undoneness when God's word is preached the preaching of the word of God exposes our absolute unrighteousness and damns and dooms forever any and all of our

attempts at gaining favor with God through our own goodness or our own works it leaves us absolutely undone I'm finished when we see Him when the word of God is opened we see our distance from the Holy God and it dooms forever all of our attempts to try to reach God in our own goodness it dooms forever all of our attempts after we're saved to try to come back to God maybe through our own works or to try to gain favor when the Galatian church was slipping out of the knowledge of the way of salvation the apostle Paul came back to them again with the word of God like a sword and pierced their hearts he said oh foolish Galatians who bewitched you that you turn from the truth having begun in the spirit are you now made perfect by the flesh he brought back the sword again once we know Christ

once we know Him the word of God you've got to stay in a place and I've got to stay in a place where the word of God comes and exposes the sneaky carnality the sneaky carnal side of man that wants to

disguise itself with righteous robes and put on a nice bow tie and appear once again on the scene working out its own salvation working out its own righteousness but the word of God comes like a powerful sword and cuts it in half time and again hallelujah because our salvation is a sovereign act of the mercy of God that's what it is it is not by works of righteousness that I am saved it is according to His mercy that He has saved me I stood like Isaiah before the throne of almighty God saying woe unto me I am undone I am unclean I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips and when I

declared man righteousness before God God took a coal off the altar that coal is the risen Christ and touched my life and cleansed my lips and changed my heart I attained it through faith I walked in it through faith I hold on to it through faith I embrace it through faith I will realize it through faith hallelujah there is no other way the righteous will live by faith the righteous live by faith the world didn't save me and the world's not gonna ever take it out of my heart I am saved by the blood of Jesus Christ hallelujah my name is written down in the Lamb's book of life devils of hell may flee if I preach or lay hands on people sick bodies can be healed and God can do marvelous things through my life but I rejoice most of all because my name is written down in the Lamb's book of life

hallelujah hallelujah to the Lamb hallelujah now Isaiah go back to Isaiah chapter 12 Isaiah chapter 12 when that knowledge Pastor David is going to preach a series on covenant relationship in July or sooner hopefully you don't want to miss that when we when you come when we come to the understanding of what it is to be saved forever delivered from thinking somehow that we've got to do something to attain the favor of God the flesh is insidious and it will always try to sneak back in and take over the place of faith and take over the place of what God has done through his son Isaiah chapter 12 in that day thou shalt say verse 1 oh Lord I will praise thee thou wast angry with me thine anger is turned away and thou comforts me behold God is my salvation I will trust and not be afraid the

Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song he also has become my salvation therefore with joy this is the joy of the Lord shall you draw water out of the wells of salvation hallelujah oh I tell you folks until you have it deep in your heart until we have it deep in our hearts that we are saved until we understand what that salvation is all about until we understand that the price is fully paid I was on the auction block of sin up for the highest bidder but a man walked in and bid something higher than everybody else he bid the blood of his son and I was bought with the blood of the son of almighty God I'm not my own anymore I belong to him he bought me he paid the price it's done, it's finished he blotted out the list of sins that was against me triumphed over the powers of hell and dark and

has promised to keep me and sustain me and hold me in the palm of his hand until he days he takes me home when that knowledge comes into your soul there's a joy the devil can point his finger at me all he wants and I I agree with him because Jesus said agree with your adversary in the way lest he cast you into prison so I agree with him he says you're this, you're that you're right, you're right, you're right, you're right I'm all of that and I'm more than you can say but listen to me I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus I've been bought with the blood of the lamb I am a new creature in Christ the old things are passing away and all things are becoming new and what's more Jesus has sealed me in the hand of the father and the bible says no man can take me out of the father's hand

hallelujah hallelujah the world didn't give it and the world can't take it away hallelujah and when you know that then all of a sudden you get into this book and with joy with joy you begin drawing water out of the well of salvation with joy this book begins to come alive and even the bitter things are sweet even the hard things to read give life hallelujah I don't find myself running from any part of this book this entire book is joy

and I know I'm saved through Christ with joy I'm drawing water out of the well of salvation in that day you shall say praise ye the lord call upon his name declare his doings among the people make mention that his name is exalted sing unto the lord for he has done excellent things this is known in all the earth cry out and shout the inhabitant of Zion for

great is the holy one of Israel in the midst of thee hallelujah secondly the joy that Jesus gives is the joy of knowing that Christ has not only become our salvation but he has also become our strength I want to say that again it's the joy of knowing that Christ has not only become our salvation but he has also become our strength hallelujah Jesus didn't save me to leave me on the ground to be kicked around for the rest of my life by the devil in every power of darkness until someday I crawl through the portals of glory and he looks at me and says well you made it hallelujah I never thought you were going to get through no no no he not only covered me but he has become my strength hallelujah Isaiah said it this way in Isaiah 52 he says awake awake put on your strength oh Zion put on your

beautiful garments oh Jerusalem shake yourself from the dust arise and sit down oh Jerusalem loose yourself from the bands of your neck oh captive daughter of Zion hallelujah what's he talking about go to Isaiah I want to show you Isaiah chapter 61 what's he talking about that Christ has become my strength hallelujah hallelujah Isaiah 61 I want to show you who Jesus is and what he came to do and the good news is that he came to do it for you and for me everything written in this book is for you and for me the devil has no right to kick you around not only are you saved tonight if you know Christ is your savior but Jesus is your strength hallelujah he hates your enemies worse than you hate them hallelujah the spirit of the Lord God verse 1 is upon me because the Lord this is what Jesus was

sent to do the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek he has sent me to bind up the broken hearted has your heart been broken is the devil always reminding you of the past and who hurt you and the things that were done is he kicking you around with your past this is the end of side 1 you may now turn the tape over to side 2 he came to bind you up he came to pour healing oil in that wound yes you'll have the memory but he'll take the pain of that memory out of your life hallelujah he sent me to bind up the broken hearted to proclaim liberty to the captives don't let the devil ever tell you well that's just the way you are learn to live with it keep it a secret keep it all to yourself hide the fact that you're in bondage in this area of your life and then just God's

forgiving you you'll never know the victory but nevertheless you'll get into heaven anyway no not only my salvation he's my strength say it with me not only my salvation he's my strength he came to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God to comfort all that mourn to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion to give unto them what? beauty for ashes look back in your past many of you that are here what did you have? you came to the altar somewhere maybe it's in this church maybe it's on the street maybe it's in another place all you had was a handful of ashes to offer to God and he took those ashes and forgave your sin and now you're here clothed in the beautiful garments

of Christ and the nature and the presence and strength of Christ is becoming your portion he gave unto them beauty for ashes hallelujah so let the world turn to ashes let happen what's going to happen I'm not looking there this bride is saying for my joy I have found my sense of beauty is in him he's the one who's in my life he's transformed my life the oil of joy for mourning the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that they might be called trees of righteousness the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified hallelujah trees of righteousness that means planted by a river of living water and when the winds come

and the storms rage they're not moved because they're not looking to this world for anything they have found their source of life in Christ and Christ alone

hallelujah Jesus said in John 16 24 hitherto or that means to this time you have asked nothing in my name ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full ask ask that's a hard thing sometimes I was in a meeting not too long ago and I shared with the people I said the Lord wants you today I feel in my heart to ask for something for yourself and to my surprise just for you something that's been in your heart something that you would like to be or to do you know not asking to consume it under your lust or anything like that like James says but just something that's been in your heart that you just and so one by one the people began to stand and I saw how hard it was and many people spiritualized it and turned it away from themselves and couldn't bring themselves to ask I sensed in my

heart a deep fear that if I ask and God doesn't answer that means He doesn't love me if I ask and He doesn't answer somehow I've been let down and disappointed by so many people I just can't take the chance of being let down by God I want to tell you something brothers and sisters tonight if you ask God will never let you down Hallelujah Hallelujah if you want to be free ask Him for freedom if you want to know the joy of the abiding presence of Christ ask Him now He may take you through a valley He will drag you kicking and screaming through places you don't understand but in the long run the peaceable fruit of righteousness will be birthed in your life a joy indescribable and full of glory will burst anew and afresh in your soul God knows how to answer what we ask for ask He says that

your joy might be full and the third thing it's the joy of trusting Him in every situation learning to trust Him the apostle James says it the best in James chapter 1 right after the book of Hebrews James chapter 1 verses 2 to 4 he says my brethren count it all joy when you fall into diverse temptations that means trials count it all joy Hallelujah knowing this that the trying of your faith works patience but that patience have her perfect work that you may be perfect and entire wanting nothing in other words going through trial and through that trial coming through the other side with a deep abiding joy knowing that I have trusted you before Lord you have never failed me I will trust you through this trial and I know that you will never fail me you will never fail me for you cannot fail

you will walk with me through my trial you will go with me through my fire whatever it is you will never leave me you will never forsake me you will never fail me I'm not looking to some outside thing to give me joy in my trial I'm looking for you Jesus and that deep abiding trust that you'll keep me in every situation that's the joy that Jesus gives the apostle Paul and his companion Silas in the book of Acts chapter 16 were preaching the gospel and the people in one accord raged against them and commanded them to be beaten and stripped off their clothes and put stripes on their back and they were laying in prison and go there with me the book of Acts chapter 16 quickly please they're laying in prison and their feet are in stocks it's at midnight their backs they're probably laying on

cold stone their backs are all in shreds and if their joy was dependent on circumstance there's sufficient evidence to think that they would be lacking a little bit of it at that time in their life but I can see Paul and Silas laying in that prison side by side and all of a sudden it's quiet you can hear the water dripping these dank dark prisons and you can hear the water dripping and there's some groaning of prisoners down the way some have been beaten and others maybe know they're going to die and there's a lot of groaning and I can see Silas saying well what are we going to do now and Paul says well we know that all things work together for good to those who love God and are the called according to His purpose Silas there's got to be a purpose in this God doesn't allow things to come

into our lives unless in these trials and difficulties there's a purpose Silas God has kept me before and I'm convinced I'm convinced that He's able to keep that which I've committed unto Him against that day I've trusted Him before and I trust Him through this trial and I don't know what it is that they began to sing but at midnight the scripture says they began to sing Hallelujah and they sang praises unto God and the prisoners heard them and I don't know what the song was but maybe it was something like this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me oh this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me the world didn't give it the world can't take it away oh this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me this joy that I

have the world didn't give it to me this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me the world didn't give it the world can't take it away hey this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me this joy that I have the world didn't give it to me the world didn't give it the world can't take it away and suddenly there was a great earthquake so that the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed I had a preacher say in a convention one time the scripture says that heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool he said and when children of God are in trial and they begin to worship and praise and there's an abiding joy he said God just simply can't help tapping his

foot on the earth and that's exactly what happened there was a great earthquake the foundations of the prison were shaken all the doors were opened and everyone's bands were loosed the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep seeing the prison doors open drew out his sword would have killed himself but Paul cried with a loud voice saying don't harm yourself we're all here he called for a light sprang in and came trembling and fell down and brought them out and said sirs what must I do to be saved yes the world is going to go into difficulty yes there's going to be trial and tribulation yes there's going to be hard times in New York City but God is preparing a people to go through those times a people that can praise him in the midst of trial a people that can trust him in every

situation who have that joy that the world didn't give they didn't get it from showboat theater they didn't get it from some restaurant somewhere they didn't get it from some positive thinking seminar they got it from almighty God himself working within their lives hallelujah they didn't get it from anything out there so if everything out there begins to fall apart they don't fall apart hallelujah the joy the joy the joy that I have now lastly it's the joy of walking with Jesus and sharing his heart that's the joy hallelujah for Paul in Acts chapter 20 just go ahead a couple of pages with me Acts chapter 20 verse 22 listen to what Paul said he said behold I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem not knowing the things that shall befall me there save that the Holy Ghost witnesses in every

city saying that bonds and afflictions abide me for none of those things move me neither count I my life dear unto myself that I might finish my course with joy can you imagine that bonds and afflictions await me and I'm going to finish my course with joy and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God hallelujah he was testifying with his life yes I'm going to go into these places but the grace of God is going to be sufficient God has called me I'm going to walk with Christ I'm going to walk right through this world I'm going to walk through everything this world is going to dish my way and I'm going to share the heart of almighty God and people are going to be saved and lives are going to be strengthened and little did Paul know that

God was going to give him to the Holy Spirit many of the books of the New Testament that are our strength our consolation our hope and our encouragement in this generation hallelujah there was joy in

Paul in laying down his life for others he was just simply following his master Jesus said it clearly in John 15 let me just read it to you John chapter 15 he said if you abide in me and my words abide in you you shall ask what you will and it shall be done unto you herein is my father glorified that you bear much fruit and so shall you be my disciples as the father has loved me so have I loved you continue in my love if you keep my commandments you shall abide in my love even as I have kept my father's commandments and abide in his love these things he said have I spoken to you that my joy

might remain in you and that your joy might be full greater love has no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends hallelujah hallelujah Paul was saying the Lord was saying if I'm in you and you're in me you're going to walk in obedience obedience will be as natural to you as breathing there's going to be a love first for God and a love for your fellow man that will just emanate it will radiate from your life and as you lay your life down as a living sacrifice for others there's going to be a joy but it's not going to be the world's joy it's not going to be a circumstantial joy he said it's my joy that's going to remain in you hallelujah my joy Jesus in the book of Hebrews it says for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is now set down

at the right hand of the father what was that joy? what was it? hallelujah hallelujah I've got to show you Luke 15 this is my last scripture I think, no it's not Luke 15 what was the joy?

Psalms 126.5 says they that sow in tears shall reap with joy hallelujah they have the privilege of following in the footsteps of their master it's all I want to do with my life I hope that's the cry of your heart in your life I was so stirred by the message this morning I said God don't ever ever let me do what Hezekiah did to be used of you and then to sell out to the world in the end oh God keep me alive in you and if I'm going I pray this continuously if I'm ever going to bring disgrace to your name just take me home just take me home just have me die in my sleep whatever you want to do and take me home I don't ever want to live a life that brings disgrace there's been too much of it done in this generation of men and women who have brought disgrace to the name of Jesus I said God I

don't want my name added to that list ever and you know all things and if you can't get through to my heart and I'm going to ever disgrace you just take me home I don't care what men say about me Lord just take me home I want to live for you I know that's the cry of the hearts of many many many who are in this house tonight it's the cry of your heart you want to live for Jesus you want to walk with Him you want to trust Him you want that abiding joy that can only come from a life of abandonment to God it can't come from anything else it's given by Christ it cannot be gotten by any of the things that that go on around it's He's the one who's the abiding joy in our lives now I want to I want to show you something about the joy of sharing His heart Luke chapter 15 beginning at verse 7 this

is an incredible scripture let's go back to verse 4 he says what man of you having a hundred sheep if he lose one of them does not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he finds it when he has found it he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing and when he comes home he calls together his friends and his neighbors saying to them rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost now I want you to keep in mind something Jesus is talking about Himself He's talking about His own heart He's talking about what goes on in Heaven and I'm going to show you in verse 7 He says I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repents more than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance now He goes on He says either

what woman having ten pieces of silver if she lose one piece does not light a candle and sweeps the house and seeks diligently until she finds it when she has found it she calls her friends and her neighbors together saying rejoice with me for I have found the piece which I had lost again He's talking about Himself you want to know how? in verse 10 He says likewise I say unto you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents there is joy in the presence of the angels of God every time a soul comes to the saving knowledge of God I don't understand this because it's in the realm of eternity and at this particular point in my life I still have a considerably finite mind as a matter of fact it might be totally finite in the sight of God but in Heaven every

time a soul is saved He's talking about Himself He gathers together the angels He gathers together everybody in Heaven and says rejoice with me for that soul that I had lost Michael, John, Alice, Ted, Sam whoever you are maybe you're in here tonight and you don't know Him if you come to this altar tonight and surrender your life to Christ He's going to gather the angels what do the angels do? they're around the throne they're ministering to His every need they reflect His glory they reflect His presence they reflect His heart that's His desire for His church to reflect His glory to reflect His presence to share His heart here on the earth and when one soul comes to Christ and repents He gathers them all together and the angels all begin to rejoice because Christ is rejoicing at the right

hand of the Father over one sinner that repents Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! that's what sharing the heart of God is all about that's why those who really do know God who really do love Him who really do have the abiding presence of Christ in their life go on to be soul winners in their communities soul winners in their homes soul winners in their office buildings soul winners because they are walking with the true joy of the Lord they're sharing His heart when a soul comes to Christ it's the greatest joy it's an absolute joy in their life to see a sinner come to God listen to what Paul says in Thessalonians 2 what is our hope? our joy what is our crown of rejoicing? are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus that is coming?

Paul says in verse 20 chapter 2 verse 20 for you are our glory and our joy that was Paul's joy it was to see souls come to God he was sharing the heart of God that's the joy of the Lord that is our strength it's a joy that says no matter what happens to me no matter what goes on around the world God I'm going through I'm going to bring honor to your name I desire your abiding presence in my life and every time if it takes an imprisonment experience if it takes a few stripes on my back for one jailer to come to God oh Lord I will rejoice because all the heavens in that moment all the angels were rejoicing when that jailer fell on his knees and came to God hallelujah hallelujah that's what the joy of the Lord is all about that's the joy of the Lord is our strength hallelujah hallelujah

would you stand please hallelujah hallelujah I have a simple altar call tonight and I would like you to listen carefully the Lord spoke to my heart to invite those who would like to come and say Lord deliver me deliver me from seeking superficial joy in my life deliver me from you know that's what leads people away from God they don't want to pay the price of walking with Him to have that true abiding joy and so they go outside and seek it in superficial places and it just leads them farther away from God but I know there are going to be people here tonight that are going to respond and say Lord deliver me from seeking superficial joy I want the joy that comes from walking with you and you alone there are others here that you've lost the joy of your salvation you remember the cry of David

Oh God he said restore unto me the joy of thy salvation God restore there are others here tonight the Lord wants to touch your life and bring you back again to an understanding of what your salvation is all about somewhere along the road you lost it there are others that would say Lord lead me into truth lead me, lead me into truth you are my strength let me draw water out of the wells of salvation once again in my life there are others who would come and say Lord forgive me for not trusting you in all situations God work in my life that kind of trust whatever it takes Lord I'm in a battle, I'm in a struggle but I've not trusted you Lord forgive me for this God I come determined in my heart to trust you from this day forward I want the abiding joy of Christ for all the rest of my life and

lastly there are those who would just simply say this Jesus I want to walk with you and I want to share your heart God I want to count it reasonable to give my life as a living sacrifice and that my chiefest joy would be to see people come to you Lord I'm a coward Lord I'm afraid there's something that the Holy Spirit you know already in your heart but you come and say Lord tonight tonight I want to make it right Lord tonight I want your heart I'm asking Jesus said if you ask that your joy might be full ask it's as simple as that we're not going to make it more complicated you just simply come if you're lost tonight Jesus died for your sin if you will come turning from your sin and believing that he took your place tonight you can be saved you can have a new life you can have an abiding

joy many have come into this house tonight and you've traveled these highways and byways that has brought you nothing but heartache but tonight if you'll surrender your life to Christ he will give you a deep abiding joy that the world will never take away from you would you raise up your hand in the aisles raise it high don't be ashamed of the Lord he's not ashamed of you you've come to be saved tonight all over here down here over here down that aisle over here all over the place you've come to surrender your life to Christ hallelujah hallelujah I want you to know something in just a moment the angels of heaven they're all gathering now glory Hallelujah.

Just pray with me, those that came to be saved. Lord Jesus, I am a sinner. Thank You, Jesus, that You died for me.

You took my place on a cruel cross. You took all of my punishment upon You. I repent of my sin.

I ask You to come into my life, to be my Lord and my Savior. I give You my life, all of it. Come and live in me.

Make me Your child. Give me the strength to live the kind of life that will bring glory and honor to Your name. Thank You for saving me.

I am saved. Thank You, Lord. Now, those that have come, just pray with me tonight.

Lord Jesus, deliver me from seeking superficial joy. Give me back the joy of my salvation. Lead me into truth.

You are my strength, my abiding presence. Teach me to trust You in every situation. Help me to walk with You and to share Your heart for lost and fallen men.

I love You, Jesus. I love You, Lord. Thank You for loving me.

This is the conclusion of the tape.

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