

The Joy of the Lord Is Your Strength

by George Mueller

The joy of the Lord is our strength, and we must seek to enter into it by surrendering our whole heart to the Lord, seeking help from God, and coming to the word of God for food.

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 119:11, Isaiah 43:4, John 15:9, Romans 8:15, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 2:1-5, Philippians 4:4, 1 Peter 1:4, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Joy in the Lord", "Spiritual Liberty"

Description

George Mueller emphasizes that 'The joy of the Lord is your strength,' drawing from Nehemiah 8:10. He explains that true joy comes from understanding our spiritual liberty through Christ, which surpasses any earthly freedom. Mueller encourages believers to actively engage with God, surrendering their burdens and recognizing their identity as beloved children of God. He stresses the importance of continual growth in faith, prayer, and the study of Scripture to maintain and deepen this joy. Ultimately, he calls for a life of gratitude and love towards God, which leads to holiness and happiness.

Transcript

Mr. Muller then spoke on Neh. viii. 10.-"The joy of the Lord is your strength" is the divine testimony here given; and the measure of our joy is the measure of our strength. How important then is it that we should seek to enter into what God has given us in and through our Lord Jesus Christ! By nature we were the slaves of Satan, of the world, and sin. Through faith in Jesus Christ we have obtained spiritual liberty; we have gained the victory. Do we enter into this, beloved in Christ, and rejoice in it? It is something infinitely more precious than civil or religious liberty. It is victory over sin, Satan, and self! Let us seek to enter into it, in order that our joy in the Lord may yet more and more increase. For this the precious blood of Christ was shed. Nothing, nothing but that precious blood could have obtained such a victory for us; and as once more we have been permitted to adore our Lord Jesus Christ at His table, let us seek to enter into the joy of this spiritual liberty.

Then again, naturally we are dead in trespasses and sins. Although we can be occupied with the affairs of this life, yet spiritual life by nature we have none. But now we are no longer the children of wrath, but the children of God; not in name, but in reality. God Almighty, the infinitely wise One, the infinitely rich One, the infinitely gracious One, is our Father for time and for eternity.

Oh, the blessedness of having a Father in heaven, and of feeling that we have not to stand alone, but that in our weakness and nothingness we can draw, through our Lord Jesus Christ, out of His inexhaustible

fulness, for everything we can possibly need for mind and body, as well as for the inner man, for our service and its difficulties, whatever they may be. We have a Father in heaven to whom we can go; upon whom we can cast our burden. And not only has He advised us to do this, but He has commanded us to do it. Now, are we in the habit of doing this? or do we carry the burdens ourselves? Do we habitually speak to our heavenly Father about every matter that concerns us?

Are we walking through this world with Him, dealing with Him about everything? or do we go alone in our own strength, leaning on nature's experience?

Ah, day by day let us value the precious blood of Christ, which has brought us nigh unto God, which has given us now this precious privilege of bringing all our matters to Him, vile and wretched as we are. We can do this now, for He loves us now; and will love us throughout eternity. Does each one of us say, I am a dear child of my heavenly Father? Do we habitually say, God loves me, I am precious to Him? Is this the language of our hearts, or do we think this would be presumptuous? Verily it is not. The words of the Lord Jesus are, "The Father Himself loveth you." He loves us as He loves His Son. Well, if He loves me as He loves Christ-with an infinite love, with a love that cannot be stronger than it is-how precious I must be in His sight! How comes all this? It is because I belong to Christ; because I am clean every whit.

Now, can I enter into this without being happy? I may talk about it; I may read and write about it; but it is impossible for me to feast on it without being exceedingly happy. The heart must be filled with gratitude to God for the gift of Jesus; and it must be filled with love to that adorable Lord Jesus who gave Himself. To Him we are indebted for all this; therefore we cannot help loving God, we cannot but love the Lord Jesus. And the language of our hearts is, What can I do, my heavenly Father, to show my love to thee? What can I do for thee, my precious Lord Jesus, seeing thou hast done so much for me? Oh, let us seek to enter into this truth by these emblems of the bread and wine which we have before us. For the more we seek to enter into this, and understand what God has done for us, not only the happier shall we be, but the holier.

Then again all our numberless transgressions are all forgiven; so that not one sin, in word, thought, or deed, stands against us. All, all is forgiven; so that before God we are as clean as though we had never been guilty of one single sin in all our lives. It is impossible to enter into this without having the heart moved with love and gratitude to God for having given us His Son, and to Christ for having given Himself.

My brethren, do we all enjoy the knowledge of the forgiveness of sins? Should there be one here without the enjoyment of this knowledge, let me affectionately entreat you not to rest until you come to it. For fifty-eight years and nine months I have uninterruptedly enjoyed the knowledge of the forgiveness of my sins. And thus my beloved younger brethren should not think this is impossible to attain and enjoy. It may be enjoyed, one year after another, and one ten years after another ten years. But you must seek to walk in the ways of God, to act according to the light which God's word gives you, if you desire to be happy in the Lord; for there is the most intimate connection between holiness and happiness. "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Again, there is an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away, which must be possessed by every one of the children of God; for we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, for the inheritance which is laid up for us in heaven, so that, as assuredly as we trust in Jesus Christ, so must the inheritance be ours.

And then further, we look on to obtain a glorified body at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ on the morning of the resurrection, the resurrection of the just, when we shall see Him as He is, and be like Him

in spirit, soul, and body.

We are in conflict now, for Satan is not yet bruised under our feet. We are not altogether like Christ yet, but this will be our blessed portion when we shall see Him as He is. Entering into all this blessed enjoyment, how can I but be happy? I cannot but be constrained to please God; I must be drawn to live for Him, to serve Him, to labour for Him.

Now while this joy of the Lord may not only be obtained and continued to us, it has been my sorrowful experience in my pastoral life to know many who set out well, but after a few years turned back to the poor and beggarly things of this world; in some cases after fifteen years, twenty years; in others after five and twenty years, and thirty years. But there should be found in the disciples of the Lord, one ten years after another, an increasingly devoted life of love to the Lord. There is nothing whatever to make this impossible; if there were the Lord would not have sent that message to the Church at Ephesus, "Nevertheless I have against thee, that thou hast left thy first love." And this after He had commended them for so many things. Brethren, have we left our first love? Allow me affectionately to ask you, How is it with you? Are you as much alive to the things of God, as much in earnest as when you were converted? Are you as much dead to the world, and is your heart as filled with the love of Jesus as at the first? If you cannot answer in the affirmative there is something wrong.

Allow me also affectionately to put these questions to the heart of every beloved brother and sister present. How do you stand towards the Lord Jesus? How do you stand towards your Heavenly Father? How do you stand towards the world? How do you stand towards your brethren and sisters in Christ? How is it with you? Have you made progress in the ways of the Lord? Ah ! my brethren, progress, progress, progress must have been made, or certainly there has been a going back; for there is no such thing as standing still. In looking back, then, individually over the three, or five, or ten, or fifty years, how is it with us? How do we stand before God now? How deeply important it is that the joy of the Lord attained at the first be continued. Although growing older and older in years, we should still be fat and flourishing, mounting up heavenwards like the eagle, so that the latter part of our pilgrimage should be the brightest and the best.

We are not straitened in God. The Holy Ghost is the same; the Word is the same; the Lord Jesus Christ is the same; and our Heavenly Father has not turned His back upon us. So far as God is concerned, and so far as His truth is concerned, there is no reason why we should not make progress in the divine life.

Now allow an aged brother to throw out a few hints, whereby this progress may be attained. (1) The whole heart must be surrendered to the Lord. If this is not done, be assured you cannot make progress. Perhaps someone says, I wish it were so; but how can I attain it? If you have but one single object for which you live for yourself-I do not say five, nor four, nor three, nor two, but one-if you have but one object for your own self, your heart is not surrendered to the Lord. If your heart has been surrendered to God, you will live alone for Him. Have you attained to this one single object of living for God? I do not ask you if you are perfectly free from sin, if you are perfectly conformed to the mind of God. I have never seen one who could say that, nor do I expect to find such an one while in the body. We must aim at it. Paul had not attained it, though he sought more and more to apprehend that for which he was apprehended in Christ Jesus. I am not speaking of perfection in the flesh, but of the full surrender of the heart to the Lord; and this I judge to be necessary if we desire that the joy of the Lord be continued to us.

(2) But there is another thing. Being perfectly weak in ourselves we must not merely desire this godly purpose of having but one object in life, but we must seek help of God to carry out our purpose; and therefore we must acknowledge our weakness and helplessness in regard to it. And not only must we begin to do this, but we must go on day by day, and every day, to the end of our course, if we would live to His honour and praise.

Another means to this (3), and deeply important, is that we come to the word of God to obtain food for our inner man. Now how does it stand with you-first, as to prayer and owning your own: weakness day by day before the Lord; and then as to obtaining help from the Lord through the Scriptures? Everybody now seems to have the newspaper pressed upon them. I do not say it is a sin to read the newspaper; some men may need to read it on account of their business. But this let me say, Take heed that the time which you should give to the word of God be not given to the newspaper.

Then again, there are thousands of religious periodicals pressed upon us; and the danger is that we give our time to them instead of to the word of God. For let us remember that human writings can never take the place of the Holy Scriptures; it is the book of God that must be the food of the soul. Are we lovers then of the word of God? I ask this question because for three years and a half I was not a lover of the word of God. I read it now and again. But in July, 1829, I became a lover of the Scriptures; so that last July it was fifty-five years since I have been a lover of the Scriptures. Now without this I should not expect to be truly happy; therefore I again ask the question, Are we lovers of the word of God? If not, let me beseech and entreat you to aim at it, and not to be satisfied until you prefer the book of God to every other book. Let it be a delight to turn to the Scriptures; it is a necessity for our joy in the Lord.

(4) Then again, we must read the Scriptures that we may carry out the truths contained in them, to show forth the truth in our lives. And if at any time we fail, let us make honest confession of our failure before God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us come again to the precious blood that makes us clean, and seek to act no more in like manner. And again let us surrender ourselves to the Lord; and it is certain that this joy will not only continue, but will abound more and more. God grant that this may be the case with everyone of us, for Jesus' sake.

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