

# Joy

by Jim Cymbala

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*We need to reclaim our joy and rejoice in the Lord, even when things are not going well, because joy is a supernatural joy that comes from the Holy Spirit and is our strength.*

**Duration:** 26:46

**Scripture:** Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 100:2, John 15:11, Acts 13:52, Romans 14:17, Philippians 4:4, 1 John 1:7

**Topics:** "Joy"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of rejoicing in the Lord and counting our blessings instead of focusing on our problems. He highlights that Satan is after our joy because without joy, we cannot effectively serve God or have faith to battle the enemy. The preacher references the early Christian church, where the disciples were described as being filled with joy and the Holy Spirit. He encourages the audience to seek the joy given by the Holy Spirit, which cannot be affected by demons or circumstances. The sermon emphasizes the need to protect and maintain our joy as it is a source of strength and a gift from God.

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## Transcript

We know that God recovers stolen property. The thief comes only to kill. But I have come that you might have.

So Satan's work in our life, once we grow in God, is to steal things that God has given us. Or steal important things. Steal our first love for Jesus.

Remember that church in Ephesus in Revelation chapter two. I have this against you, you've lost your first love. How would you lose your first love? It was stolen.

Somebody ripped it off, Satan. Satan's not interested in your credit cards, where you live, your car. He gets around without an automobile, thank you.

He has his own way of transportation. And so he's not interested in those things. Anything to discourage us, but those aren't the things he's after.

He doesn't use money and buy anything. So he doesn't want money, but there are really important things, like let's say a calling on somebody's life here today. He'll try to discourage you so that you'll give up on the calling in your life.

He'll call someone to work in the prison ministry, and he'll try to discourage you and divert you. He'll call a pastor and his wife in the ministry. Then he'll cause attack, permit Satan will cause attacks to come so that they'll maybe get discouraged and say what's the sense, I'm giving up.

These are the battles going on everywhere. Satan is trying to steal things. Now of all the things that he's trying to steal, one of them is something we hardly ever notice, and yet it's so very, very, very important.

I want to just talk about it because we're gonna claim recovery tonight. We are reclaiming anything that's slipping out of our lives or he's taken. We are gonna get it back right now in Jesus' name.

Let's just clap our hands, say amen to that. Now with all that's happening in the world and earthquakes and all these kinds of things, people are thinking about wow, there's wars, rumors of wars, there's roaring of the sea, there's earthquakes, there's all these things going on. But I would like to point out to you that in the spirit world, in another way, beside the physical world, there's another plague going on beside the plagues that they have in certain parts of the world and these flu bugs, super flu bugs that nobody can cure.

There's another plague going on, and there's also a famine. And the plague that I want to talk about is if you just read the newspaper, you look at your own life, you watch television, you get on the internet, whatever, there's a plague of anger and hate everywhere in the world. Go to the Middle East.

Those people protesting in the streets, I'm not for them, against them. There's an anger and a rage in them. Hatred, it's everywhere.

Nobody can disagree with anybody and say, I see it a different way. Everyone's in the attack mode. And anger and hatred everywhere.

You see it in politics. It's not that the Democrats have a different view than the Republicans. The Republicans, the Democrats, they hate.

They attack, there's anger, there's bitterness, there's rage everywhere. There's union now, disputes going on. You see those people in Wisconsin and all of that? It's not, I have a right, it's I'm gonna blow up in your face.

There's a rage in it. It's not that I disagree with what you're doing. No, nobody disagrees like that anymore.

It's rage and I'm at your throat. That's everywhere. And there's also a famine, and that famine is a famine of joy.

You want to find a scarce thing? On your way home tonight, look at the faces that you see in the subway, in the car, in the parking lot, all that. Tell me how much joy you pick up. This world right now is the most joyless world that we've ever known, and unfortunately, the joylessness has invaded the Christian community.

We've had our joy taken from us. Now, I'm gonna talk about that in a second, but just think about that. Joy is something that you can have from God or it can be taken from you.

It can be ripped off. Now, I'm not talking about happiness. The difference between happiness and joy is happiness is based on your circumstances.

If things are going good, you can be happy. Someone says something that you like, you're now happy. Someone who you love has a baby, you're happy, okay? But happiness comes and goes because if the baby gets sick, you're not happy anymore.

You're happy, you got a job, then you got laid off, you're not so happy anymore. Your happiness went out the window. But joy is something so far deeper than happiness, it's not even to be mentioned in the same sentence.

People who curse God can be happy. They can have a good meal. You eat a good roti, you can get happy sometimes.

But joy is something totally different. Joy only comes from God, just like peace only comes from God, I'm talking about divine peace. Joy, according to the Bible, is listed with love and peace and self-control.

For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy. Second one is joy. So when Jesus said, I want you to love one another as I have loved you, everyone knows.

I can't love anyone like Jesus loves them. But he said, no, do it because I'm gonna send my spirit. My spirit will give you that love.

For every command that God gives, he also gives a promise so that we can do what he commanded us to do. Now, that is especially also true for joy. When the Bible talks about the disciple, in fact, that's an early description of the Christian church, one that we don't use.

We talk about attendance, building, budget, how good the choir sang and all of that. But on Paul's first missionary journey, he left one place where he had founded a church, and the Bible simply says this under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

End of story. Well, I know, but how were they doing? Didn't you hear it? They were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost. Well, where did they meet? How many were going? Who was the pastor? How well did he preach? That's secondary.

They were filled with joy and the Holy Ghost, and really the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit. Now, way back in time, in the Old Testament, there was always the mention of joy. The sacrifices were supposed to be offered with joy.

God said, if you come with a grumpy spirit and you bring your animal or your meal offering, and you come like, yeah, here's the thing, you know, here it is. Hey, priest, here's my offering. No, God says, I want you to bring it with joy.

I want you to be praising me. I want you to be full of that kind of delight and celebration in your spirit to God. Now, when Jesus came, we see a development of joy in a new way.

One of the stamps that should be on every true Christian is joy, because what kind of advertisement are we to people if we don't have joy? If you're depressed and you're telling them, oh, but believe in Jesus, and you'll be just like me. Who wants that? Who wants that? That's what they're trying to get out of. They're depressed.

They're angry, and when they meet joy, they're disarmed by joy because there's so little joy. Just go anywhere today. Go to the diner on the corner.

Go anywhere you want. You're not gonna find a lot of joy. And the music has anger in it, and especially for the young people.

It's incorporated anger. Look at any CD cover or any album cover and the way that people look. Do you think it's, you think they take a picture of some group and everyone's going, hi, how are you? No, it's, it's, it's, I'm depressed and angry, and I want you to know it, too.

Am I right or wrong? All right, so anger is in now. Joy is out. Anger is definitely in.

But listen to what Jesus said in John. I have told you this about abiding in my love and keeping my commandments. I have told you this so that my, what, whose joy? Not your joy, his joy, supernatural joy, joy that comes through the Holy Spirit, that my joy may be in you, and that's not enough, he says, and that your joy may be complete, developed to the uttermost.

I say all these things. What does it matter if you're joyous? What does it matter, you know? In fact, in some circles, the sterner and more sad you are and morose, the more spiritual you are. That's not so much in now, but in certain legalistic places, that was very much in.

I remember growing up, and there was a woman in the church, I think I've told you about her. I was about seven or eight, no, maybe 10, and she wore all black, she wore a black dress, and a black hat. She never sat near anyone, she never talked to anyone.

She never smiled once that I saw her. She wore black shoes, she had like black-tinted stockings, she had a black dress on every single week, black kerchief, and a black hat, and never smiled. Sometimes she was used, it seems, in the gifts of the Spirit.

I was just little, I couldn't discern what was going on there, but I was fascinated with her. I remember my little 10-year-old mind, 11-year-old mind, whatever it was, I'm trying to figure out who is this woman? Everyone else talked, she didn't gather with anyone, didn't talk, she'd come to church, then leave, walk down the street. I remember seeing her walk one day all by herself down the street with high heels, but they were thick.

I remember that. You know those kind of shoes? I one time said to one of the leaders in the church, and I said, what's with that lady? Which lady? That lady that never talks, never smiles, never mixes with anyone and all that, and they went, like they wanted to clue me in on something that my little mind couldn't understand, they went, oh, she lives close to God. And I remember my young mind saying, that's how you are if you live close to God.

God forbid she backslides, she'll die in like a day. But the stamp that's supposed to be on us, we're supposed to be a joyous people. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament, you offer that with joy. Why would God, if he's our Father, want us not to have joy? Do you have any children, do you have any grandchildren? Are you really pleased when you see them depressed and angry, or do you weep for your own joy when you see them happy and rejoicing? So how does God feel when he looks down on some of you and me tonight, and he sees you down, he's done all that he's already done for you, but you won't accept it, you won't celebrate it, will you? You're gonna be down and depressed, you're gonna focus on the negatives, you're gonna specialize in your problems, and you're gonna forget all the things God has done for you, and you're gonna think that doesn't affect him. It grieves his spirit.

Anger and that kind of morose, down spirit, that grieves the Holy Spirit. That's not why God came. God loves me, and he wants to see me depressed and angry.

That doesn't make any sense whatsoever. Jesus went further and warned us about this thing of joy where he says, so with you, he's gonna die soon, so with you, now is your time of grief, but I will see you again, and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. No one will take away your joy.

No demon, no circle, let's put our hands together. Come on, loud, let's do it. No demon, no circumstance.

So the Bible says that Jesus was teaching about these things and said, not only do I want you to have joy and have it to the full, but the joy I give you, no one's gonna take it away. So obviously, this is something to fight for. This is something to be kept.

I wanna tell you something now. More than your money, Satan's after your joy. He has no use for your money, but to rob your joy and make you less effective.

Without joy, how are we gonna serve God? How are we gonna have faith to battle the enemy? How in this troubled world are we gonna stay on top of everything without joy? If we're depressed and angry, we tell choir members, before they come in, in case you don't know this, I have a talk, I've been doing it for 20 years after Carol interviews them, and we tell them one thing, and I hope it's true of them. Here's one thing, you're gonna minister. You're gonna minister.

Anyone who sits in the pew, I can't control what they do because it's open to the public and they come here and sit. Anybody can act any way, it's a public building. As long as they don't distract someone, they can be whatever.

But I said, no, you're gonna minister. Now, the rule for ministry is you're not allowed to be in a mood. No one in the choir's allowed to be in a mood.

Am I right, Esther, am I right? Isn't that what I say to everyone? You're not allowed to be in a mood. The people are in a mood, don't you get it? We have to be full of joy. How am I gonna lift people up who are in the ditch if I'm in the ditch? Come on, can we say amen to that? So you gotta be full of joy.

Now, there's an interesting question in Galatians. Something went off with that church, and this question in Galatians comes up, and Paul says to the church in Galatians, Galatians 4.15, what has happened to all your joy? And I wanna say that to some of you. What has happened to all your joy? What's happened to all your joy? I'm not asking how many Bible verses you know.

I don't care how long you've been coming to church. I wanna ask you something. Where's all your joy? Because now we're not honoring God the way we should.

We call ourselves, we're his people, and we're depressed about it. We belong to Christ. He died on the cross, and I'm angry.

So Paul says something's wrong. Of course, they had gotten into legalism. Whenever people get into legalism, they lose their joy because instead of looking at Jesus, they're looking inward to see if they're good enough to merit salvation, so you lose your joy in a second.

What happened to all your joy? All right, let me close this up. Put the next passage on, okay. Now, you know this one in the Old Testament.

This is why this is so important, what Paul asked. Nehemiah said, go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is sacred to our Lord.

Do not grieve for the, say it with me, the joy of the Lord is your. Now, the people had not been obeying, and now they repented, and you see, there's a time for repentance. There's a time for brokenness and all of that, but Nehemiah understood how this worked, and he said, wait a minute.

Now that you've repented and all of that, you've repented. Don't stay mourning anymore. Now start to eat and celebrate and rejoice and laugh and be happy, why? Because the joy of the Lord is your strength.

When Satan steals my joy from me, he's stealing my strength. The joy of the Lord is not a nice feeling, it's my strength. How am I gonna stand against the enemy if I'm depressed to begin with? Oh, come on, let's put our hands together and thank God for that.

Okay. Now, this joy that I'm talking about, remember, I'm not talking about happiness, and I'm not talking about disposition and personality, DNA, and how your parents were. Those all influence us, but God is stronger than all that.

Greater is he that's in us than the one that's in the world. So right now, no more denial, no more rationalizations. If we're not living in joy, I'm out of God's will.

If I'm not preaching with joy, if I'm not serving you with joy, if it's a burden for me and it's like I'm depressed that I have to do it, then I ought to just get out of the ministry. Everything has to be done with joy. Now, notice also here that two things can exist at the same time.

Joy is on a level deeper than our consciousness and our circumstances. So Paul says in 2 Corinthians, I believe it's chapter four or five, he says, talking about his life, he says as an apostle, sorrowful yet always rejoicing. Well, wait a minute.

How can you be sorrowful but rejoicing? If I'm sorrowful, I'm sorrowful. If I'm rejoicing, I'm rejoicing. You're either rejoicing or you're sorrowful.

You can't be sorrowful yet rejoicing. Yes, you can. You could lose your mother.

You could be weeping over some loss. You could have your heart broken by someone and on that level, you're crying and you're mourning or you're suffering. But if you just go deeper, there's joy unspeakable.

And full of glory. Do we get an amen here? Joy unspeakable on this level below. So it's just like that example about when they had the tsunamis and they have all this stuff.

There's a place in the Pacific Ocean where the water is so deep that the bottom of the water, at the very bottom, it's so deep that it hasn't moved. It hasn't been ruffled in thousands and thousands of years. Whatever the age of the earth is, it's never been touched because the waves are all up here.

See, everything's rocking and rolling on the top. But on the bottom, they find shells or they get stuff that have stood there untouched except the water running over it, just the water laying on it. No movement.

Up here, all kinds of stuff, but that's why God gives us joy. We can be crying and rejoicing at the same time. How many know what I'm talking about? Just lift your hand.

Lift your hand if you've ever been sorrowful but you're rejoicing on the bottom. Okay, so now. Look, one more verse.

I wanted to build this so that we could pray. You became imitators, Paul says to the church at Thessalonica of us and of the Lord. In spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

In other words, what I'm talking about tonight and what you want to recover is not trying to be happy. What was that song there? Try happy, what's that, guys? Don't worry, be happy. Who sang that song? Anyone know? Bobby something? Don't worry, be happy.

That's great. That's a little ditty, but we're not talking about that. We're not talking about positive thinking.

We're talking about the joy given by the Holy Spirit. What demon could touch the joy given by the Holy Spirit? What circumstance in life could affect the joy given by the Holy Spirit? Now, so it's given by God and it's our strength. And Jesus said, don't let anybody take it from you.

And Satan comes to steal. All right, so here's what I want to leave you with. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, all right, now here's what I want to close with.

Here's what we're going to do. What's the difference between the joy of the Lord and rejoicing? In other words, the joy given by the Holy Spirit, and yet there's a command, rejoice in the Lord. So how does this work? Because the secret is how you're going to reclaim your joy tonight.

You're going to reclaim your joy in the next five minutes. And you're going to have it back, I promise you, if we do obey God's word. Now, when things are flowing and things are certain on kilter in life, we can sense his joy.

You're in a good meeting, you're in a good prayer meeting. You just, you hear the word of God. You're in a good praise and worship time.

Or it's just, you study the Bible at home and God visits you, just joy, you're bouncing joy. You want to shout hallelujah. Anybody ever shout hallelujah outside a church? You just hallelujah.

I've done that sometimes in stores without even thinking with people listening to me. I just, waiting in line, I go hallelujah. And they look at me like, what was that? Okay, that's the joy given by the Holy Spirit.

We can enjoy it, we can enjoy the joy. But sometimes we get distracted. Sometimes we get our eyes off Jesus.

Sometimes we start focusing on the problems and we forget the 2,485 blessings. Anybody ever do that? We got three or four things facing us, job, long hours, cranky boss, cranky family, in-laws, whatever. People acting ugly and nasty.

And the minute you start focusing on that, even though God's Spirit is in you, you'll lose the experience of joy mighty quick. So what do we do when Satan's trying to rob that? We rejoice in the Lord. See, now joy, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy.

That's a noun. The fruit of the Spirit is love, noun, joy, peace. Those are nouns.

Paul says a verb, rejoice in the Lord. And again, I'll say it to you, rejoice. So how do you rejoice in the Lord? Notice, not rejoice, don't get happy, don't try to be happy.

That's a waste of time. I'm gonna be happy. You can't.

But what you can do is rejoice. Notice, in the Lord. What does that mean? Rejoice in your relationship and union with the Lord.

So how it works is like this. We're gonna do it right now, because some of you who are full of joy are gonna rejoice, and some of you who the enemy has stolen your joy. I know you love God.

I know you're doing your best with your family. You lost your joy. I'll say with Paul, where has all your joy gone? You used to be much happier.

Well, I'm mature now. No, you're not mature, you lost your joy. Because the more mature we get, the more joyous we'll be.

How many say amen, right? So losing your joy is not a sign you're getting older and more mature. So how you rejoice in the Lord is this, with no feelings. I did it yesterday.

I had to do it, because there's some things that were way down in my mind. I feel nothing. I don't feel down, I don't feel up, but I don't, not rejoice, I don't experience His joy.

In fact, I'm weighed down a little bit by some pressures and things. But Lord, I remember your goodness to me. How many can remember the worst day in your life thus far, and God brought you out of it? Just lift your hand up, okay? All right.

So Lord, I'm not feeling anything, but I remember the worst day of my life, and that you brought me through. Wait a minute, I also remember that before I was even born 2,000 years ago, you died on the cross, and every sin I could ever commit was laid upon you, and you said, it is finished, and my sins are washed away, and I will never be judged for my sins, because the blood of Jesus cleanses us. Come on, put our hands together from all sin.

I look back all the times you've helped us to spread the good news of Jesus. Now, as I'm remembering this and saying it out loud, guess what? The joy wheels start to move inside of you. How many know what I'm talking about? Put your hands together.

Now, I'm not rejoicing in my circumstances. I'm not rejoicing in my circumstance. I'm not even talking about my circumstance.

I'm talking about Christ, what he has done. Rejoice in the Lord. Don't rejoice.

Rejoice in the Lord. Start counting your blessing. If, brothers and sisters, I'm telling you, it's wrong that we're surrounded by blessings, but we focus on problems.

That's wrong. We should face our problems, not be in denial. We should bring them to the throne of grace.

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, with prayer and supplication, make your needs known to God with thanksgiving. We should do that, but my goodness, some of you, oh God, so much rejoicing. You're not rejoicing in the Lord.

You're not remembering all he's done for you. Some of us should have been dead by now. Come on, how many think you might have been dead? I can say an accident God delivered.

Wave your hand if you could have died, but the Lord preserved you. I mean, why am I not rejoicing in the Lord today? And I'm gonna keep rejoicing in the Lord, for the joy of the Lord is my strength. One more hand clap of praise.

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