

Joy of Christ

by Phoebe Palmer

The joy of Christ can be fulfilled in the Christian by setting oneself apart for God's work, living to please God, not oneself, and receiving holiness and happiness through Christ.

Scripture: John 15:11, 1 Corinthians 6:19, Philippians 2:13, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 2:21

Topics: "Christian Joy", "Holiness"

Description

Phoebe Palmer preaches on how to obtain the joy of Christ, emphasizing that the joy of Christ was in doing the will of His Father, enduring suffering for the salvation of souls, and having joy in prospect. She challenges Christians to set themselves apart, consecrate themselves to God's work, and live not to please themselves but to bring souls to Christ. Palmer encourages believers to find holiness and happiness in Christ, to act upon the principle of belonging to Christ, and to have the joy of Christ fulfilled in themselves through self-sacrifice and dedication to God's will.

Transcript

How to Obtain the Joy of Christ

"That they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves." The privileges of the Christian have all been purchased by the Blood of Christ, and are therefore high and holy, responsibilities. That is to say, the provision on God's part of privileges for us creates the obligation on our part to attain to their enjoyment. And are you, reader, a joyful Christian? Have you a Christ-like experience in this regard? I do not ask you whether you have joyous emotions under the exhilaration of an exciting tune, or some joyous recital by your neighbour; but, Is the joy of Christ fulfilled in yourself? Christ says, "That My joy may remain in you." What was Christ's joy? In what did it consist? The joy of Christ could not have stood in inseparable connection with harmonious songs or blissful recitals; for these He might have enjoyed while resting in the bosom of His Father, but these were not sufficient to detain Him in the abodes of purity and blessedness. Spirits which might obey and adore were from eternity at His command; and had His joy been in these things only, He had never left those abodes of eternal and unmingled blessedness. What then was the joy of Christ? and how may Christians have His joy fulfilled in themselves?

It was the joy of Christ to do the will of His Father. "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." It was the will of God that Christ should be made a sacrifice for the sins of the world. It was the joy of Christ to humble Himself, and be found in fashion as a man, and to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. But how was the joy of Christ in this? Was He not "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief?" Yes, but joy

may consist with sorrow; as David said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God" (Psalm xl. 8); and the Captain of our Salvation leads out His triumphal armies under the banner inscribed, "Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing."

Then it was also for the joy that was set before Him that He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set before Him that He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." It was for this that He "endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself." It was that He might bring many sons unto glory, that "the Captain of our Salvation was made perfect through sufferings." Christians, then, may be joyful, and have joy in prospect also; though, in the work of bringing souls from under the dominion of Satan to Christ, sorrows, deep and heart-searching, have to be endured.

Though withstood by fiends and men, and by the seemingly pious or openly vicious, amid sufferings, mental and physical, the Christian may have the joy of Christ fulfilled in himself. Ay, he may have Christ Himself within, and then he will hear his indwelling Saviour say, "The works that I do shall ye do also; and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father." With Christ dwelling within, the same Spirit that inspires Christ inspires the soul. The joy that inspires Christ is the inspiration of that soul. A conscious identification of interest in the work that brought the Saviour from Heaven on earth, how blissful! Oh, the privilege of partaking of the joy of Christ in the bliss of saving souls! For this joy the Saviour set Himself apart, sanctified Himself: "For their sakes I sanctify Myself." And for this purpose is the believer sanctified, set apart, that he may be a worker together with God in the great work of saving the world. Sanctification professed, which does not inspire its professor with feelings and sentiments in regard to a perishing world similar to those the Saviour entertained in setting Himself apart, is not the sanctification of the Bible. We are not unmindful of the fact that Christ set Himself apart as a vicarious sacrifice, and that there can be nothing vicarious in the sufferings of the Christian; but there is a sense in which the Christian is left to fill up "that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." And the Christian, possessing the spirit of his Master, for the joy set before him, in prospect of saving souls and bringing many sons to glory, will be brought to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. But when he looks with an eye of faith down the vista of time, and, piercing the veil of eternity, beholds among the ranks of the redeemed those who, through his instrumentality, have been won from the ranks of Satan, who can tell the joy, the bliss of the inspiring vision? Then the joy of Christ may be, ay, must be, the joy of the Christian. Christians must be happy; and they will be happy, if the aims which inspire the heart of the Saviour inspire their hearts.

Is a joyless disciple now reading these lines? Pause and ask yourself, "Wherefore joyless?" Have you yet put yourself in the way of attaining the joy of Christ? Have you set yourself apart, and placed yourself upon God's altar, to live not to please yourself, even as Christ lived not to please Himself, but to consecrate yourself to the work for which Christ consecrated Himself, that is, the Salvation of previous souls? If you have not done this, you have not yet come to the point where you can have the full joy of Christ. Set yourself apart now, to live as it were out of yourself, in the will of God. What had Christ to do with merely human satisfactions, apart from the will of His Father? He took not upon Himself the nature of angels, but the nature of men, and was very man as truly as very God. But He lived not to please Himself.

Resolve that you will live no longer to please yourself, but that all your joys shall be Christ's joys. And with this resolve set yourself apart to work for God. After you have laid yourself, with your will on every point, upon the altar, you may know that God receives you; for the altar is God's altar, an altar most holy. The moment your offering is laid upon it, it is sanctified; for the altar sanctifieth the gift. Whatsoever toucheth the altar shall be holy. You present your sacrifice through Christ, and an offering presented to God THROUGH CHRIST is holy and acceptable. While resting on this hallowed altar, even Christ, whose

atonement taketh away the sins of the world, let not your chief solicitude be about joyous emotion. What you need is holiness, the image of God. This you receive in resting your whole being on Christ. "For as many as touched Him were made whole of whatsoever disease they had;" and thus now, it is only to touch Christ in faith, and according to thy faith it is done unto thee. And is the offering now presented? Can you say:

'Tis done: the great transaction's done; I am the Lord's, and He is mine?"

Then begin from this moment to act upon the principle that you are no more your own. You belong to Christ. Let Christ's work be your work. If He came from Heaven to earth to save sinners, deem no journeying, no labors, and no exile from kindred spirits or blissful climes, too self-sacrificing. Think of your Divine Redeemer, your precious Saviour, "who, 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 throne of God. Then shall you have the joy of Christ fulfilled in yourself.

"Wouldst thou the mind of Christ possess?

Wouldst thou in joy abound?

Know, holiness and happiness

Are in one channel found!

"Be holy then, and Christ's own joy

Shall unto thee be given,

And God will all thy powers employ

In bringing souls to heaven."

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