

Joy and Strength (Neh. Viii: 10)

by Seth Rees

The joy of the Lord is our strength, and we can experience it by looking to Jesus and trusting in the power of the Holy Ghost.

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:10, Psalm 16:11, Psalm 28:7, Isaiah 41:10, Acts 2:4, Romans 15:13, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Philippians 4:13, Hebrews 12:2, 1 Peter 1:8

Topics: "Christian Joy", "Holy Strength"

Description

Seth Rees preaches about the importance of finding joy in the Lord as our strength, emphasizing the difference between the joy of the Christian faith and the gloominess of other religions. He highlights that the joy of the Lord is not dependent on outward circumstances or emotions but is a deep, abiding strength that sustains us through all trials and sorrows. Rees encourages believers to seek the joy of the Holy Ghost, which provides unshakable support and courage in the face of challenges, enabling them to triumph over every foe.

Transcript

"For the joy of the Lord is your strength."

There is no greater difference between the Christian religion and other religions than in the matter of cheerfulness and joyfulness. The natural countenance of heathendom is gloomy and often very sad. Wherever you find the heathen at worship, they seem to have a veil over their faces; they are having a hard time. There is nothing about any other religion but the religion of Jesus Christ that is really joyous. The natural countenance of genuine New Testament religion is radiant. It is something that is joyful and happy and yet a great many people misunderstand what real joy is. They suppose that it is only transient and is absent when certain conditions and manifestations do not appear. The joy of the Lord is something as substantial as the Lord Himself, and does not depend upon outward circumstances, it does not depend upon frames or moods or feelings or ecstasies. Some people imagine that there is no joy where there is no emotion, ecstasy or rapture. People are sometimes troubled just here and suppose that they have lost the joy of the Lord when they have lost the conscious feeling of ecstasy or intoxication. Not so; the joy of the Lord is something that abides in the heart in the midst of untold sorrow, under burdens that seem too heavy for us, when pressed above measure, when in perils -- everywhere, no difference with what we are surrounded if we have the joy of the Lord it is our strength. We are commanded to "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might," and we have no right to be any other way.

What we claim in this movement is to be getting back to the Bible. We claim to be hunting for Bible principles, Bible practices, Bible experiences, and Bible results, and we are seeking to make the nearest possible approach to the Bible, to the Acts of the Apostles, to whatever the infant Church had when she was inaugurated under the personal leadership of the Holy Ghost, and we ought to look diligently to see what is expected of a Holy Ghost Church. We ought to search the Acts of the Apostles especially, to know how near we are approaching the Bible standard and Apostolic practices, power and results. It is utterly impossible for us to succeed unless we have the joy of the Lord. This is more than happiness, more than rapture, and more than can be expressed by hallelujahs and shouts. These are the best we can do in the attempt to express it, but it is much deeper than all of these.

The man who has a clean life, a pure heart, and the Holy Ghost indwelling has a joy inexpressible. When he has done his best with hallelujahs, amens, etc., he feels that he has not uncorked his experience. Words are inadequate to express it, it may be with streaming eyes, it maybe with groans that can not be uttered, it may be with carrying a yoke that is easy only because the Lord carries the heavy end of it. We are often allowed to be partakers of His sufferings for we must have enough to make us conscious that we are yoked up with Him. He lets enough suffering come as we go along that we may truly say that we have tasted of the cup of which He drank, and are experiencing something through which He has passed. How we ought to praise the Lord for something that abides, for something the mail can not change or unexpected telegrams can not affect.

Sometimes I have said to my wife, "It seems like my mail will turn me gray:" such startling disclosures, such strange revelations, such awful tales of woe, such wrecked homes, ruined families and blasted hopes; such divisions and subdivisions, even among so-called Holiness people, to which I do not wish to refer except to impress upon your minds that we are living in awful times and we need something that abides: something so deep, so permanent, so unshaken that we are strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

Beloved, we are going to have to face more rugged things. Most of this audience are young, life is before you, but rugged things are in your path, you will have to shoulder great responsibilities, you will have to face ranks of malicious and designing enemies. You will have something for this fight that when all your friends are gone and there is nobody in reach that you can lay your hand upon; when you are so separated and isolated from everybody else that you feel absolutely alone you will have something that will under gird and support you in it all. Thank the Lord it is afforded in the joy of the Holy Ghost which is your strength.

You never saw anyone who was sad and gloomy who was strong. Sorrow, sadness, gloomy appearances affect others; this is catching, you can spread it through a whole family. So is joy and radiance catching, and is as spreading and more so than sadness. If you are joyful you will say hopeful things that will bless somebody. When you find people in awful straits God will make you a blessing to them. Having been in straits yourself you will be able to comfort them with the comfort wherewith God has comforted you, and having known joy in sorrow, having known strength in weakness, having been able to pull through long hard straits yourself you will be able to lift others and will know how to tide them over a crucial point. Let us look at some of the things that may be expected when we receive the Holy Ghost and when this holy joy comes into our lives.

First, it makes us strong. We have no weakness to talk about. We have had our little time of weakness, but now we are strong in Him. It will add to your strength to talk about what He can do to magnify and exalt

Jesus. You will always grow weak talking about your own defeats, and your own lack, and your own weakness. It is far better to go to the great supply house of grace and help yourself to plenty instead of mentioning that you are weak or small and insignificant. Look God in the face and claim grace and faith enough to make you a giant to leap over a wall and run through troops, you will then accomplish the purpose of God. This we can do while we look with a steadfast gaze on the Christ of Calvary. A look is enough for the penitent; a look is sufficient for those who are seeking salvation, and when the struggle is over and the consecration is made and everything else is done then a single look is enough. No one ever gets the blessing of holiness or any experience until they look. They can fuss around and roll in the straw and beat the bench or chew the carpet but they have got to get through and take a look. When we look at Jesus then the joy of the Lord comes pouring in. We must lean forward to see and hear what the Lord has to say, and that means to shut out all other voices, to shut out other people: that means not to look here and there, but in looking to Jesus you will get your strength. There is enough in a look to make you defeat a whole regiment of devils. There is strength in simply lifting your eyes.

When the Israelites were bitten, the pole with the brazen serpent was set up in the midst of the camp, in sight of every tent, and the only way to be healed, was to look. I suppose hundreds of them were just able to crawl to their tent doors and then they had only to lift their eyes and look. This is the great secret of success in the New Testament law, "looking," oblivious to everything else and everybody else -- I mean in the sense that they do not hinder us. I do not mean that you get stoic and refuse counsel. Nobody in the world is easier to approach or more willing to receive counsel than the man or woman who has received the Holy Ghost, but after we have received and weighed the counsel with courtesy and considered it with candor we still have to follow the Lord as He leads.

When battles are upon us we do not have to fight them ourselves but "looking unto Jesus" we find that He will fight them for us. When trials and testings are upon us and temptations multiply we only need to know how to "look." I have heard people say, "When trials come, I run to my closet;" but there are times when they will overtake you and you will not have time to get into your closet. There is a place where you can live in the element of prayer and in such close touch with the Son of God that when temptations overtake you on the street car, on the steamboat dock, or in the midst of business you will simply lift your eyes. They may fill with tears, and your friends may imagine you are in trouble but you are not, you are all right -- "looking unto Jesus."

There is no pattern but Jesus, there is no law but the Bible. We must take the New Testament as our rule of practice and Jesus as our only pattern. We must refuse to pattern after each other either in experience, not even demonstrations or emotions, in feelings or exhibitions of any kind. We can not measure ourselves by somebody else's life. Somebody else may have been longer on the emery wheel. They may have been sandpapered for years. The sin is taken out of our life in a moment of time but the corners and rough places are not all taken off at once. If you take a Christian for your pattern he may have been dressed down and shaped up and polished and God may have expended thousands of dollars worth of grace upon him before you get started, and the fact that he is somewhat ahead of you should not discourage you, but if you will have patience and trust Him, He will put you on the wheel too, and sandpaper and fix you up so you will shine as well as shout. We are not to compare ourselves with somebody who is six months ahead of us; we are to do our best to overtake them, but are not to be discouraged with the grace, powers and capacities that God has placed in our own lives. Many a time we do not see the best there is in us. Sanctified people are not very fond of looking at themselves. Moses' face shone but he did not know it. When people are always looking at their own experiences or at

somebody else's experience they will lose the shine. Our only business is to please Jesus. Keep this one thing before you, "This one thing I do forgetting the things that are behind, I press." The standard is Jesus, and we must keep our eyes fixed on Him, and while we look and listen the joy of the Lord will pour into our souls and we will take on Divine strength. Glory to His name!

If we get back to the Bible, and get the fruits of Pentecost, we will have developed in us such rugged qualities and such strength of purpose that no difference what comes we will face it. Pentecost is death to cowardice; Pentecost destroys all fear. If you are afraid to face your foes, when the test comes you will fail; but they who trust in the Lord shall never be confounded, they shall never fail, never know defeat. Hallelujah! I say, that with the Holy Ghost failure is impossible and you can press your way through any crowd of enemies of any sort and triumph over every foe that dares to lift its head against you. Glory to God!

One of the most positive evidences of spiritual wreckage and ruin is the unscriptural and unwarrantable demand that everybody shall make certain demonstrations and practice certain gymnastic movements or else they have not the experience of full salvation. God has never intended that we should all be alike. He has never made two blades of grass alike or two leaves on a tree after exactly the same pattern. He does not want us to ape others in experiences or in manifestations. All He wants you to know is that you are clean, and are His, and that you will follow Him to the ends of the earth. When you are sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost you will know this, and the joy of the Lord will remain in your souls, and you will go from victory to victory, and from triumph to triumph, until you leap into the gates of the city of God. Hallelujah. I am glad the battle is on, and it will soon be over. I am glad the time will come when we will be through the fight. The digging will be done and we will shine and shout and live to the glory of God forever.

The Lord bless you, Beloved, let the joy flow. When you see somebody else blessed half to death do not try to work yourself up to be like that. If in their experience the joy is manifest through their shouts or through their heels, yours may flow just as strong through silent tears and suppressed, quiet hallelujahs. I am sure I do not know which is the best. Nothing is profitable unless it is inspired by the Spirit. Ordinarily I feel the least like jumping when others are doing the most of it. The times when I feel especially demonstrative is when I get among a lot of dead heads. When I am among those who think I must jump and shout or I have no salvation I usually feel very quiet.

Instead of trying to pattern after someone else if we can only fill two by four let us do it to the glory of God. I would rather fill two by four, and fill it full than to fill four by six only half full. You will always feel awkward and out of place trying to fill somebody else's place, but if you fill your own you will feel comfortable and move with perfect ease. You are not your own any way: you are God's property and He has the responsibility. You will be satisfied with whatever the folks think about you, there will never be any running about to find out what they do think. You will not care what they think about your messages, they are not yours anyhow. If you understand that the whole business is the Lord's, and make or break, success or failure; if you can realize that He is responsible for the whole, you can afford anything that He can afford. Everyone who is sanctified wholly has his own music box. It may not always be musical to others, but you are satisfied. I have the joy of the Lord this morning. I also have some burdens, it is true, but why should I tell you about them or burden you with them? You have some burdens -- perhaps enough; why listen to mine. I do not mean that we are never to go to each other with these things. I suppose that we ought to go occasionally for counsel and advice, but we ought not to pour a whole reservoir of our individual burdens over on to somebody who has enough already. If you are having it hard, you are having it just like someone else had it, who was a hundred years ago exactly where you are. But they are in Heaven now,

and it will not be long until you will be there too, and somebody else will be going through the same trials that you are today. If we are the Lord's it is no difference where we are, or what we are going through, we are headed for the Kingdom and we are going in. Praise the Lord!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/seth-rees/joy-and-strength-neh-viii-10/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net