

Joy in the Holy Ghost

by Thomas Cook

The sermon emphasizes the importance of joy in the Holy Ghost as the source of true happiness and fulfillment in life.

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:10, John 16:24, Romans 14:17, Galatians 5:22, Philippians 4:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Christian Joy"

Description

Thomas Cook preaches about the surpassing joy and music in God that must conquer all worldly pleasures, emphasizing the need for Christians to have a joy in their souls sweeter than any delusive worldly song. He highlights the importance of being filled with the Holy Spirit to experience a fountain of lasting joy that extinguishes desires for base delights, leading to a life filled with the celestial joy of Heaven. Cook encourages believers to seek the fullness of the Spirit, which contrasts with temporary happiness, offering a permanent and abiding joy that comes from being in harmony with the Divine will.

Transcript

The question is often asked, "How are we to keep our converts from lusting for the flesh-pots of Egypt, the leeks, the onions, and garlic of their former life?" There is but one answer, the joy they have in God must surpass all the pleasures of sense. We read in the old myth that the Sirens sang men to death, but died themselves if they failed. When the Argonauts passed by them, Jason ordered Orpheus to strike his lyre. The enchantment of his singing and music surpassed theirs, and the Argonauts sailed safely by; whereupon the Sirens cast themselves into the sea and became transformed into rocks. We cannot make the Sirens fail unless we carry a charm with us greater than theirs. Joy must conquer joy, and music must conquer music; the Christian must have a music in his own soul far sweeter than any Siren-song of this delusive world.

There is certainly a general promise to all believers: Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." Twice St. John mentions that the purpose he had in writing his Epistle was "that your joy might be full." Paul goes a step farther, and insists that joy is a Christian duty.

"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice." Evidently God means His people to be enthusiastic, buoyant, glad. A joyless Christian is a stumbling-block to the world and an offense to his brethren and to God. One of the chief secrets of the success of the early Christians was that they were filled with a gladness which was all-satisfying. Men judge of Religion by those who are considered to possess it, and

they will embrace or reject it according to the manner in which it is exhibited before them.

They are attracted more by radiant faces and over-flowing hearts than by eloquence or argument or any other human power. When we show them something better than they have and carry about the advertisement of a gladness which arises superior to all circumstances, we shall win men for Christ. The joy of the Lord is our strength. The average type of Christian life will have to be raised before there can be any great advance of the Kingdom of Christ. Many of God's people have just as much gloom and depression and as many cares and anxieties as the people of the world.

"How is it," said a godly minister to the writer recently, "that we so very seldom meet with a really joyful Christian?" It is certain we do not find in our Churches so much of the exultant, exuberant joy which our fathers had. The absence of the rapture and triumph expressed in Charles Wesley's hymns too plainly indicates an imperfect acquaintance with Christ's great salvation. The reason why Christians are not overflowing with joy is because they are not filled with the Holy Ghost.

"The Kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." When the blessed Comforter fills the heart of a believer, he opens such a fountain of joy within him, so sweet, so full and so lasting as to utterly extinguish all desire for base delights. "I am dwelling," wrote the seraphic Payson in one of his letters, "in the land of Beulah, the celestial city is in full view. I can hear its songs; I am gazing at its sunshine; I am breathing its sweet odors. Oh, that I had only known what I now know twenty-five years ago!

I might have walked all my days in the light of Heaven." The Spirit-filled Christian has an artesian well of joy in his heart, a miraculous spring opened in his breast, which fills, floods and overwhelms his soul with joy unspeakable all the year round. Common surface wells are soon dry, but artesian wells, even in dry weather, have plenty of water. "Be not drunk with wine," wrote the Apostle, "wherein is excess; but be filled with Spirit; speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

The fullness of the Spirit is God's provision for the universal longing of our fallen race for some external stimulant. It is surprising to some that the fullness of the Spirit is several times in the Scriptures contrasted with fullness of wine, but contrast always implies some points of likeness. In both experiences there is exhilaration and elevation of feeling produced by an agent from without the man, entering and exciting his sensibility. To those who find life monotonous, who crave for a stimulant which will bring relief, some excitement from

The trivial round, the common task,

which often makes life so drab and colorless, the Apostle offers, instead of strong drink, which ends in the scorpion's sting, the joys of the Holy Ghost. His presence in the hearts of the people will "set the pulses dancing, and thrill the jaded frame, and lift the spirit above the task -- work of life and the dreary and hard conditions which make up the daily lot of multitudes." Hence it is when the Holy Spirit comes to abide with us we burst into spontaneous singing.

All other joys are superficial, evanescent, transient, but the joy of the Holy Ghost is the possession of the Holy Spirit Himself -- the perennial fountain of all blessedness. Such joy is quite distinct from happiness, which depends, as the etymology of the word indicates, upon what happens -- outward circumstances, such as health, prosperity, gladness, favorable position, the surrounding of friends, and comforts.

Depending as it does upon external circumstances, happiness, like the tide, ebbs and flows. It is subject to constant variations, sometimes calm and subsiding, at other times blazing up, a tumultuous feeling, a quick emotion, a lively passion. Joy, on the contrary, is an internal condition; it arises from our inner being, it flows from the soul, and being a self-dependent spring within the heart, it is permanent and abiding. Life's changes and reverses, what we call trouble, crosses and disappointments, which sweep over our life's surface, do not produce a ripple on the face of the waters of this deep well. "Your joy no man taketh from you."

This joy is not so much ceaseless rapture, but a settled quiet of the heart, the tranquillity of a soul poised in harmony with the Divine will -- it is having Christ's joy fulfilled in us. The joy of Christ when on earth is seldom spoken of, but His whole life of obedience was His joy. Spiritual rapture is not found by seeking it; we find it as Christ did in doing the Father's will. "True, pure joy," says Amiel, "consists in the union of the individual will with the Divine will, and in the faith that this supreme will is directed by love." Such joy we share with Christ when we are filled with the Holy Ghost.

We need not go abroad for joy,

Who have a feast at home;

Our sighs are turned into songs,

The Comforter is come.

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