

The fruit of the spirit is.. .joy

by William MacDonald

Transcript

“The fruit of the spirit is.. .joy.” (Gal. 5:22)

Man never finds real joy till he finds the Lord. Then he enters in to what Peter calls “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Pet. 1:8).

Anyone can rejoice when circumstances are favorable, but the joy which is the fruit of the Spirit is not the result of earthly circumstances. It springs from our relationship to the Lord and from the precious promises He has given to us. Christ would have to be dethroned before the Church could be finally robbed of its joy.

Christian joy can coexist with suffering. Paul weds the two when he speaks of “all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col. 1:11). The Thessalonian saints had received the word “in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Th. 1:6). Suffering saints down through the centuries have testified how the Lord has given them songs in the night.

Joy can coexist with sorrow. The believer can stand by the grave of a loved one, shed tears of sorrow at the loss, yet rejoice at the knowledge that the loved one is in the presence of the Lord.

But joy cannot coexist with sin. Whenever a Christian sins, he loses his song. Not until he confesses and forsakes that sin is the joy of his salvation restored.

The Lord Jesus told His disciples to rejoice when they were reviled, persecuted and falsely accused (Mt. 5:11, 12). And they did! Not many years later we read of them leaving the courtroom, “rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name” (Acts 5:41).

Our joy increases as we grow in the knowledge of the Lord. At first, perhaps, we can rejoice in minor irritations, chronic ailments and trivial inconveniences. But the Spirit of God wishes to bring us to the point where we can see God when circumstances are at their worst and rejoice in the knowledge that His way is perfect. We are spiritually mature when we can say with Habakkuk, “Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation” (Hab. 3:17, 18).

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