**The Joy of the Lord**

*Philippians 4:4*

**Introduction**

1. ***“There are many who say, ‘Who will show us some good? Lift up the light of your face upon us, O LORD!’ You have put more joy in my heart than they have when their grain and wine abound. In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.” (Psalm 4:6-8, ESV)***
2. Christians are a people to be envied for their immeasurable joy.
3. We are told to rejoice always in the Lord (**Philippians 4:4**).
4. We treasure this, but at the same time wrestle with it – I know the verse and principle, but how do I find it and secure it?
5. Rest assured that God affords us true joy in great measure through Christ our Lord.
6. Presence: Where is joy found?
7. ***“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (Philippians 4:4)***
   1. ***“in the Lord”*** – not that the Lord is the object of our rejoicing (though that is true), but the sphere of our rejoicing.
   2. The Scripture describes fellowship in this way **– John 14:10-11, 19-21, 23** – not literal location, but the activity of a relationship.
8. **When I am in Christ, I am afforded joy:**
   1. **Galatians 3:26-29** – baptized into Christ.
      1. ***“for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.” (ESV)*** – the idea is that being in Christ (fellowship, relationship) you are now a son of God (Christ’s brother), this was through the instrumentality of faith.
      2. **(v. 27)** – explains, concretely, the instrumentality of faith. (**cf. Colossians 2:12)**.
      3. **(v. 29)** – reveals the blessing of the relationship, which is a part of what affords us joy.
   2. **Galatians 4:19** – Paul’s work among and toward the Galatians was to form Christ in them (growth of the relationship). (**cf. Galatians 2:20**).
      1. **Galatians 5:6; 6:15** – the relationship is one of activity and transformation.
      2. **Romans 8:9; Galatians 5:22-25** – in submission to the Spirit’s revelation we are allowing Christ to transform us to be like Him, and there is fruit which reflects such – part of this is joy.
9. My fellowship with Christ is where I find joy:
   1. **Philippians 2:5-13** – joy in possessing the mind of Christ.
      1. **(v. 5)** – following **(vv. 3-4)** – the humility before, and service of others is in imitation of Christ **(cf. John 13:14**).
      2. **(vv. 6-11)** – humility to exaltation. (**James 4:6, 10** – pursuit of what is highly esteemed with God brings true joy.)
      3. **(vv. 12-13)** – the mind of Christ stoops to serve others, but especially God (**v. 8).**
      4. **When we take on the mind of Christ we open the door to the world of purpose, value, and true joy.**
   2. **John 15:9-11** – there is joy in committed fellowship with Jesus.
10. Power: What is the driving force of joy?
11. ***“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13)***
    1. ***“I can do”*** – *ischyō* (verb) – “(1) to be strong, (2) to have power” (THAYER)
    2. ***“strengthens”*** – *endynamoō* (verb) – “‘to render strong’ (en, ‘in,’ dunamis, ‘power’)” (VINE); “to be strong, endue with strength, strengthen” (THAYER)
    3. ***“For all things I have strength, in Christ's strengthening me” (YLT)***
       1. I.e. independent of personal strength/power, or circumstances.
       2. Christ is the infinite strength/power for our sakes in all things and transcends all circumstances.
    4. Context – **(vv. 11-12)** – contentment, the opposite of which is a thief of joy. (**cf. 1 Timothy 6:10**).
    5. **Joy is reached and sustained, not by our circumstances** (abased/abound, full/hungry, abound/suffer need)**, and certainly not by our strength, but by the power of Christ.**
12. **Opposite is true: “I cannot do all things through the strength I derive from myself.”**
    1. But what does this mean for us in relation to the true source of strength to do all?
    2. Just give up? – A preacher has said, “In the past, I’ve thought, ‘Maybe if I read my Bible more, pray more, go to church more, etc. I’ll be strong enough to overcome.’ That never worked because I was looking to make me strong enough.”
       1. This does not reflect the sentiment of **Philippians 4:13**.
       2. This is not the way we will find constant joy.
13. **Knowing the power of Christ’s resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings is how I reach true joy:**
    1. No reaching joy through self-will (error) and fleshly achievement – **Philippians 3:1-6**
       1. **(vv. 1-2)** – rejoice in the Lord, not in anything else (ex: what follows…) – don’t seek joy outside the Lord, like Judaizers.
       2. **(v. 3)** – we (faithful Christians) are in true covenant (circumcision), receive direction from God (Spirit), find joy in Christ, not the flesh.
       3. **(vv. 4-6)** – All that may seem to make aa person glad, fulfilled, content, and righteous in man’s eyes, Paul had.
       4. If no righteousness before God in this **(v. 9),** then no true joy.
    2. Full self-surrender to Christ and His standard of righteousness led Paul to joy – **Philippians 3:7-9**
       1. **(v. 3)** – rejoice in Christ – **(v. 8)** – gain Christs.
       2. **(v. 9)** – not own righteousness, but that from God by faith – HE IS DECLARED RIGHTEOUS, BUT NOT BY PERFECTION, BUT BY FORGIVNESS AND RECONCILIATION THROUGH CHRIST’S SACRIFICE.
    3. Progression in Christ’s purpose for us brings true Joy – **Philippians 3:10-14, 20-21**
       1. **(v. 10)** – knowing (experientially; **cf. Ephesians 1:19-20**) the power of resurrection through our transformation, includes participation to the extent of suffering (**cf. 1 Peter 4:13**).
       2. **(v. 11)** – all in the goal of being raised to be like Christ and with Him.
       3. **(vv. 12-14)** – living for that goal.
       4. **(vv. 20-21)** – living on earth aa a citizen of heaven, anticipating the time where called home.
       5. THIS IS WHAT EMPOWERS US TO POSSESS AND MAINTAIN TRUE JOY.

**Conclusion**

1. We will not find the joy we crave without going to the place where God promises its presence, and embracing the power which God provides to secure it.
2. May we live in the joy of the Lord here while we await the eternal joy of the Lord in heaven.