

Holiness Leads to Joy

Introduction and Review

- The Holy Spirit working through difficult circumstances can create desire for the word of God (8:1-2).
- The Holy Spirit creates reverence for the word of God in the hearts of believers who hear it read (8:4-5).
- In proclaiming the word of God or preaching, the biblical text should be read (8:3; 1Tim. 4:13a).
- In proclaiming the word of God or preaching, the Scriptures must be correctly interpreted, explained & applied for people to understand (8:6-8; 1Tim. 4:13).

I. Understanding Causes Godly Sorrow (8:9)

A. The word of God reveals His will

*The word of God always accomplishes God's purposes (Is. 55:11). The word reveals God's high & holy standards along with people's weaknesses & failures (Rom. 7:7, 12).*

B. The word of God requires a response

*After having ignored & been deprived of the Scriptures for 140+ years, believers are now sensitive to their sin – "all the people wept..." (2Co. 7:10-11). The people proved their repentance by their obedience & desire for the word. God had forgiven them & they no longer needed to be sorrowful – "do not mourn or weep". They did not receive God's comfort & joy because they continued to feel guilt & shame = self-inflicted. This was to be a day of celebration & rejoicing – Feast of Trumpets (Ethan 1, Neh. 8:2c).*

**ILL:** Man committing sexual immorality was ex-communicated in hope of true repentance & salvation (1Co. 5). After his repentance, Paul encouraged the church to forgive & receive him back as a believer in Christ (2Co. 2:5-11).

**APPL:** It is human nature to assume that an awful sin committed for a long period of time requires a long time of sorrow & repentance. But once the Holy Spirit has completed the work of repentance, the sorrow is to end. We do not determine the length of time for sorrow & repentance. After repentance comes JOY!!!

II. Understanding Causes Godly Rejoicing (8:10-12)

A. Reasons for joy (v. 10-11)

*Two reasons for joy: "this day is holy to our Lord" [God had forgiven, cleansed, delivered, made them holy & given this day for joy – this day (Sunday) has been set apart as holy for us to worship & have joy; don't misuse it] & "the joy of the Lord is your strength" [strength to resist fear, worry, guilt, shame, devil, flesh; to worship & praise – don't misuse it]. The word of God gives us reasons for joy & rejoicing: Salvation (Ps. 13:5), God's steadfast love (Ps. 31:7), rewards (Mt. 5:12), names written in heaven (Lk. 10:20), hope of seeing Christ (Rom. 5:2), when sinners repent (2Co. 7:9), Christ is preached (Phil. 1:18), when believers obey God (2Jn. 4), God's judgment (Rev. 18:20), marriage of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7). Don't ignore these reasons – receive & understand them today. These reasons are intended to bring us joy!*

B. Responding with joy (v. 12)

*Knowledge & understanding of the truth gives every believer the basis for joy. But every believer must personally **apply** the word to your life – eat, drink, send portions, make great rejoicing. You must obey; do it. No one can rejoice for you. Your joy & blessings are to be shared with others – send portions.*

## CONCLUSION

Now that you understand these truths about the joy of the Lord, how are you going to respond? Are you going to continue in sorrow & discouragement when it's time to rejoice? Are you going to continue in guilt & shame when God has forgiven you, cleansed, delivered & made every promise to care for you in this life & throughout eternity? Are you going to walk away from here today untouched by the grace of Jesus, the love of God & fellowship of the Holy Spirit? Or will you thank God for all the reasons that He has given you to rejoice in the Lord today? Will you thank God for your salvation, His steadfast love, His rewards, your name being in heaven, His promises to care, provide & protect you, the hope of seeing Christ face to face soon? Can you see that the joy of the Lord is available to you today to strengthen right now? Joy means God is at work in you to will & work His good pleasure; Jesus gives it & the world cannot take it away. The joy of the Lord will strengthen you for life in your home, job, school, recreation, medical problems, financial problems; for prayer, singing, praise, worship, teaching, listening, serving, etc. The joy of the Lord is your strength; believe & receive it today; do not walk away from this place empty today!

And if you are not a Christian, they joy of the Lord is available to you also. You can only have this joy when you come to know Jesus as your Savior... Will you trust Him & believe today...?

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[Prepared by Willie D. Woodmore](#)