

# JOY IN THE MOURNING

*"For I will turn their mourning into joy and will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow" - Jeremiah 31:13*

Happiness, rejoicing, gladness, and joy are all words that are intertwined throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Celebrations of harvest, marriage, birth of children, victory over enemies, and worship of our God have these descriptive words woven throughout these biblical stories.

Some of the responses are temporary emotions; some have a longer lasting thought tied to them.

But what about when the circumstances of life do not dictate a joyful response? How can the apostles, after a public flogging, leave "rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name"? (Acts 5:41) How can Paul and Silas be "singing hymns of praise to God" after being beaten and thrown into prison? (Acts 16:25) How can Jesus be described as the one, "who, for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame"? (Hebrews 12:2)

True, everlasting joy is not simply an emotional reaction to our circumstances but putting hope in our Savior despite our circumstances.

The very definition of the word "gospel" means "news that brings joy." Jesus brought joy with Him at the events surrounding His birth. John the Baptist leaped with joy in Elizabeth's womb when Mary entered the room. Mary rejoiced in God for choosing her to be the mother of Jesus.

An angel of the Lord declared to the shepherds that he was bringing "good news of great joy which will be for all the people" (Luke 2:10). The shepherds ran to see the Christ child laying in a manger and went away glorifying and praising God for all they had seen and heard. Good news



entered into this world to bring us great joy of knowing God the Father personally and forevermore through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ.

After we receive Jesus into our lives, He sustains us with joy as a natural outpouring of the fruit of the Holy Spirit. “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” (Galatians 5:22). As we walk in the Spirit, He allows us to overcome our natural tendencies of worry, fear, and anger, and replace them with love, joy, and peace, even when circumstances and emotions would dictate otherwise.

The way to experience this eternal joy in our lives is to continually abide in Him.

“I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand. I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely.” (Psalm 16:8-9)

“O, Lord, in Your strength the king will be glad, and in Your salvation how greatly he will rejoice. For You make him most blessed forever; You make him joyful with gladness in Your presence.” (Psalm 21:1, 6)

For me personally, the Lord gave me this word “joy” last fall to study and immerse myself in. I have a notebook, which on the cover is printed, “Love God & Live with Joy!” and in it I wrote down pages and pages of verses that speak on the word joy. This was during a calm season in my life, when this study was seemingly not needed, but I know now that He was lovingly preparing my heart for a stormy season of life this past winter. Shortly after my word study on joy, my husband had a much needed surgery, my dad passed away, and the word “coronavirus” infiltrated our everyday



lives and turned each of our worlds upside down. I have experienced the deep emotions of grief and cried out to Him during these last few months because of my circumstances, but I can also say, at the exact same time, that I have had everlasting joy in my life because Jesus lives. Do the same: rest in His love today, abide in His word, and experience the joy of your salvation.

*“The Lord God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult over you with joy, He will be quiet in His love, He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.” - Zephaniah 3:17*

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