

The Portrait of Christ's Joy

Jesus referred to joy several times during His incarnation. Most of the times He spoke of joy, He was referring to something He wanted to give to us. The One Who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities wants us to have His joy. Looking away from all of the things that could distract Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame, and focused on the joy that was set before Him. It is difficult to even imagine the condition of His eternal abode in heaven before He came to this earth to be our Savior. From the wealth, glory and majesty of heaven, He came down to our poverty, shame, and loss. He Who was spotless and sinless became sin for us so that we may be saved. He was surrounded by people who were sick, diseased, hurting, wounded, and bruised. His life was filled with misunderstanding, rejection, and ridicule. It would have been easy for Him to have withdrawn and become miserable, bitter, and filled with anger, but He was filled with joy. His joy was full, rich, and sustained Him in the most difficult of times. His joy never faded or diminished even when His pain and suffering was extreme because it was rooted in the realities of eternity, and the Father's love.

John 15:9-11 NIV84 As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you obey My commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed My Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

The Lord is telling us three things about joy.

First, He has joy.

Second, His joy is related to genuine love.

Third, He wants us to have His joy, so that our joy may be complete.

What is joy?

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary: "Joy is the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires."
The joy that Jesus is talking about is much greater than that.

Joy is the proof that what we have really satisfies the heart.

True joy continues to be strong even when circumstances of life are not constantly great. Joy that remains must have a basis that transcends the circumstances of life. According to what Jesus just said, His joy is related to the unconditional love that God has for us.

John 15:9-10 NASB95 Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just

as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

Think about these words: "as the Father has loved Me."

Jesus made it clear that He lived in, enjoyed, and knew the Father's love. He never doubted the love of the Father and as a result of that He had confidence that He could depend on the Father.

1 John 4:16 tells us: "God is love."

Jesus knew the unchangeable nature and character of God's love. He knew that it was impossible for the Father to stop loving Him. He had personally experienced the wealth and benefit of God's love. His commission and anointing to come to this earth was a response of the love of the Father.

Not only did Jesus know the eternal value of God's love, He also knew the joy of abiding in God's love.

1 John 4:16-17 NASB95 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

When our lives are governed by love toward God, we have confidence in difficult days and our joy will be complete.

This joy that we have is rooted and grounded in the depths of God's love for us.

Deuteronomy 7:9 NASB95 Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, Who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

In John 15, Jesus encouraged His disciples to walk in obedience to God's will so that nothing would impede their enjoyment of the Father's love. We can see the portrait of Christ's love and joy lived out in His life.

Hebrews 12:1-2 NASB95 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, **who for the joy set before Him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

The consequences of the things that Jesus was to suffer could not deter or destroy His joy.

His joy was secure because He knew that the reward of the Father was coming. Since He could trust in the Father's love, He could endure suffering knowing that joy was coming. He knew that every attack of the enemy would be defeated. He knew that He was going to triumph over every sickness, sorrow, and sin. He knew that He was going to lead us in triumph. The fruit of abiding in the Father's love produced this joy. He knew that nothing could separate Him from the love of the Father. His joy was full and secure because He knew the love of the Father could not be changed.

Where did Jesus find His Own deep joy?

His joy was found and maintained by a constant communion with God His Father. Jesus wanted His disciples to also have the joy that comes from dependence upon the Father. He wanted His joy to be their joy.

Jesus knew that the pathway to real joy was filled with God in one's life.

Abiding in Christ and keeping His commandments leads to fullness of joy.

Listen to what Hebrews says about the joy of the Lord.

Hebrews 1:8-9 NIV But about the Son He says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by **anointing you with the oil of joy.**"

The Lord Jesus was anointed with the oil of gladness and joy.

What is the oil of joy?

In the Bible, oil is associated with the Holy Spirit. After He was baptized in water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and remained upon Him.

John 3:34 NLT For He is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives Him the Spirit without limit.

Jesus is the Anointed of God, the Messiah, the Christ. The Holy Spirit was upon Him in a greater portion than any other. His companions received the enduement of power as the Holy Spirit descended upon them on the Day of Pentecost. As a result, they demonstrated Holy Spirit power and life to their dark world. The Holy Spirit was upon Jesus with a greater portion than any other. He maintained closer relations with the Father, and walked in perfect obedience to the Father's will. It is natural for the fruit and power of the Spirit to be manifested in His life in a greater portion.

Romans 14:17 NASB95 For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus walked and lived in the fullness of joy in the Holy Spirit.

The Lord's joy was full and overflowing throughout everything that He faced. We may not fully know or understand the victory that lies ahead. We may not fully understand the extent of the Father's love.

Jesus has opened the pathway for us to experience the love and joy that He possessed.

He knew that the transient troubles and sorrows of this life will fade. He took all of the steps that were ordered by God to alleviate the many things that steal, kill, and destroy our joy. As Jesus the Christ faced every sickness and burden that had been brought on man by the curse, He knew the joy that was coming.

It dramatically impacts your attitude when you know the outcome.

Jesus was commissioned by the Father to bring peace, joy, hope, and love to the world. He was the hope of all the ages. He came to deliver the oppressed and set captives free. He came as a Healer and Restorer. When faced with opposition, Jesus knew that He would gain the victory and conquer every foe. This is more than a winning attitude or a positive outlook on life. Jesus knew the heart, power and love of the Father. He already knew the end of the story.

Hebrews 2:10-11 NASB95 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

Hebrews 9:28 NASB95 So Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time for salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

This gives us joy that is full of glory.

We may face troubles, trials, sorrow, and suffering, but we are coming out of this. Christ Jesus is our hope, joy and peace. In Him our joy is full and complete. This joy that we have gives us strength and overcoming confidence.