

**Sermon 08:** "Joy and Strength in the Lord"

**Scripture:** [Nehemiah 8: 9-12](#)

**Theme:** *We should seek to know experientially the joy of the Lord, which yields spiritual strength.*

Last week we saw a turn in the book of Nehemiah. We saw Nehemiah "hand off" his work to Ezra as Ezra read aloud the Law and taught on the Word of God. This week, we are taking a closer look again at verses 9-12 of chapter 8. This week we take a closer look at what joy in the Lord looks like.

**God and His Word should be a source of great joy for the believer.**

For the believer, this should pretty much go without saying. However, when was the last time you stopped and really thought about this? But why?

I think that the [Heidelberg Catechism](#) does a great job of defining why God is to be a great source of our joy.

**Question 1.** What is thy only comfort in life and death?

**Answer:** That I with body and soul, both in life and death, am not my own, but belong unto my faithful Saviour Jesus Christ; who, with his precious blood, has fully satisfied for all my sins, and delivered me from all the power of the devil; and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father, not a hair can fall from my head; yea, that all things must be subservient to my salvation, and therefore, by his Holy Spirit, He also assures me of eternal life, and makes me sincerely willing and ready, henceforth, to live unto him.

This is the Gospel, the Good News and saving work, of Jesus Christ and it is the best news anyone will ever hear. This good news brings us joy. The fact that we are not our own, all of our sins have been fully paid by Jesus Christ, and we have the Holy Spirit who assures us of eternal life should bring us the ultimate joy. Our greatest source of joy comes from God alone.

Furthermore, God has given us His very Word to help us understand Him and to have great joy in Him. The Bible is the very word of God<sup>1</sup> and contains all that we need to know in order to believe in the saving work of Jesus Christ<sup>2</sup>. It is through our reading of Scripture

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16

<sup>2</sup> John 20: 30-31

# NEHEMIAH

The Restoration of God's People

that we enter the inner courts of God. Through it we see His character, justice, Law, grace, mercy, and glory.

Just like the people in Nehemiah, when we read the Word of God we see how short we fall from being like Him and pleasing Him. For some of you, when you first heard the story of what Jesus Christ had done and accomplished on the cross, you were moved to tears, and for some, salvation. However, when we read his Word, we are to be convicted, moved to repentance, but ultimately to find great joy and satisfaction in this good news.

When we read, we should be moved to worship. Whether that be singing, playing an instrument, praying, serving, painting...etc. As John Piper says, *"God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him."*

When we find that our greatest joy comes from God and his Word alone, we then have the greatest words to give us strength. Have you ever noticed that when you start your day reading God's Word and pray to Him, things in your day (generally) are a lot better? Have you ever noticed that when you as a husband or wife are diligent in your reading and praying, that your marriage and parenting are easier (not perfect, but easier)? Have you noticed in the good times and bad, that God is still the same yesterday, today, and will be tomorrow?

As we go on living our day to day lives from here, go remembering that the same power that conquered the grave lives within us here still today. We don't need to lean on our own strength, but we can stand firm on Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, who point us toward the will of the Father.

## **Questions to think about:**

1. Is depression a sin (always, sometimes, never)? Defend your answer biblically.
2. How can a believer distinguish the conviction of the Holy Spirit from the accusation of the enemy?
3. Why is it important for every believer, in spite of natural temperament, to develop the joy of the Lord? What is at stake?
4. What made Jesus rejoice greatly? What does He tell us to rejoice in (Luke 10:17-22)?