

JOY OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

At the foundation of the New Covenant there is eternally the unlimited love of the Lord and the free gift of His love and grace,

Ephesians 4:7 unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. [KJV]

Yet, among the instructions of Jesus on the occasion of His sending the disciples out into the world, where they may face persecution, were these words:

Matthew 10:28 "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." [NRSV]

The context, of course, was that there will be a judgment — of the living and the dead.

And the Judge will be Jesus:

John 5:22 The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the Son, [NRSV]

For, as it was foretold by David:

Psalms 96:13b he is coming, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth. [NRSV]

This was confirmed by the Apostle Paul in his sermon to the Athenians, on Mars Hill:

Acts 17:31 "because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." [NKJV]

Blessed by His love and grace, I must not neglect, but pay much attention to His judgment, which will be final: no arbitration, no appeal judges, no Supreme Court.

As the Almighty, the Lord has no need to please or to pay homage to anyone; however, owing to His love for me, He has laid out His life, willingly: no one forced Him.

He did not have to do so: it was only the culmination of His love, manifested in the incarnate Son.

John 10:17-18a "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ^{18a}No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." [NRSV]

He heaped judgment on Himself and instead of destroying "both [my] body and soul in hell," He redeemed me:

Ephesians 1:7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace [NKJV]

He reconciled me to God: He reconnected me to God in an altogether new framework.

Hebrews 9:15 Therefore, He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. [HCSB]

Hence, my greatest joy: the complete reconciliation with the Creator of the universe.

Romans 5:11 More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. [ESV]

He gave me the assurance of His forgiveness, so that I may have confidence when I approach Him in time of need.

Hebrews 4:16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. [NASB]

With the reconciliation, He gave me eternal life, which is the knowledge of Him.

John 17:3 "Eternal life is to know you, the only true God, and to know Jesus Christ, the one you sent." [CEV]

When I fully realize the alternative ("destruction of body and soul in hell"), I cannot but have the greatest joy for His undeserved love,

1 Peter 1:18–19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. [NKJV]

In conclusion, we are

Romans 3:24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. [NKJV]

As a crowning blessing, the Apostle Paul offers a logical deduction in the letter to the Romans to assure us of unlimited benefits, gained because of the Cross, the Resurrection and the Redemption:

Romans 8:32 Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else? [NLT]

The greatest joy of the Christian life is the realization that although on one hand, the Almighty God, has the immense, unalloyed power and the right to condemn me for all eternity — according to His just and righteous judgment; on the other hand, He has given me eternal life and reconciliation with Him, by making the just and righteous punishment fall entirely on His only Son, as I trust and obey Him.