

MARK JENKINS MINISTRIES

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Everlasting Joy Is Yours, Now

Dear Friend,

I remember back in the early 1970's, when I was about 10 years old, my family went to what was called the Full Gospel Business Men's Association monthly meetings. One Saturday night each month this group held meetings at banquet halls and a special guest, generally someone who was not a full time minister, would speak with much of the attention on the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

Those were some wonderful times and I saw many people filled with the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and healed from all kinds of diseases. One thing that stood out to me were the songs that were being sung at those meetings. I remember thinking how different they sounded. I was used to singing from the hymnal and these songs didn't come out of any hymnal I had ever seen.

I later realized that what they were singing were actually verses from the Bible set to music. The reason for me even thinking about all this was because the other day I was reading in Isaiah 51 and I came upon one of those verses that we used to sing and all of a sudden I could hear those words in song in my head. (Isaiah 51:11)

“Therefore the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy; and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”

I can't read this verse without hearing that tune in my head. What a beautiful, powerful, word from God. This word describes us today who are born again children of God. Whether or not you believe it, this is who you are and this is what you have in your reborn human spirit. It's time we believe this.

The reason I mention all this isn't to reminisce about the way it used to be. I mention this because not only did the tune draw my attention to this verse, but this time I read the verse as though I had never read it before. I challenge you to do the same and to ask yourself; “Does this verse describe my life today?”

What Isaiah prophesied here paints a picture of a Christian that sadly too few of us resemble. Look at these words: “Everlasting joy shall be upon their head.” When is the last time the joy of the Lord that is already in you was so big inside you that people were asking why you were so full of joy? Most likely, sad to say, if anyone was asking what was going on with you it was because your countenance had fallen and gloom and doom was written all over your face. Lest I seem to be exempting myself from this group, I will fess up and say that the latter describes me far more than the former. The reason for this I believe is because we are not tapping into who we are and what we now have as born again children of God.

Isaiah didn't come up with this message on his own. Can you imagine Isaiah thinking; “I believe I'll tell the people this because it sounds really good.” A true prophet of God under the old covenant knew better than to speak in God's stead words that were not really from God. Doing so could result in some very bad consequences for that prophet.

No, these were God's words coming out of Isaiah's mouth. And, because these were God's words describing us today, then the truth of the matter is that this is how we are as children of God regardless of how we feel. In other words; **“Everlasting joy shall be upon”** us, and so it is! I believe the reason it seems that everlasting joy is just beyond our reach is because we are so focused on this natural world and its negative pull against us and we fail to acknowledge who we are in the spirit. We can doubt it and dispute it and never believe the truth of God's word, but it will not change the fact that the word says it so it must be this way no matter how we feel.

Look at the next words, **“...They shall obtain gladness and joy...”**. I hate to say it, but I have not come across many believers who look like they have obtained **gladness** and **joy**. I know for myself, I probably don't come across as someone who has obtained **gladness** and **joy**. Sadly, my wife tells me that I have a “hostile resting face”. Maybe you can relate to what I'm saying. I'm not trying to look “hostile”; I'm just so focused on the task at hand that I fail to allow what's really in me to come out. Can you relate to what I am saying? Instead of **gladness** and **joy** pouring out of me like water, I'm sure I look completely opposite to that, and maybe even at times a little scary. Why is that? We who are born again have **everlasting joy** on the inside, in our reborn human spirit. According to what Paul wrote to the Galatians, this joy is a fruit of this reborn human spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23)

“But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”

Take a look at this list and ask yourself when was the last time that you can remember actually partaking of any of this fruit? Each one is present inside of us, but we interrupt their flow from the inside out when we focus on natural circumstances and take our eyes off of Him. In order to receive the full benefit of the fruit from our reborn human spirit we must redirect our attention to God and away from anything or anyone else.

It is no accident that Paul referred to these as fruit. Think about natural fruit, an apple for example. How is an apple produced? First of all, an apple is only produced on an apple tree. You can't walk up to a pear tree and pull an apple off of it. Why is that? It's because of the law put into motion by God that a seed planted in the ground will only produce after its own kind. Consequently, when an apple seed goes into the ground it produces an apple tree and the fruit of that apple tree is apples. You cannot plant an apple seed and produce oranges.

That being the case, when the seed of the word of God goes into the soil of a person's heart and they believe it and act upon it, the result is a reborn human spirit is produced. The fruit that can be produced from this reborn human spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. But, don't think the manifestation of this fruit in your life is going to happen without resistance.

Everything in this natural world resists the fruit of the spirit from manifesting. What do I mean by that? Just simply living in this fallen world means that we constantly have pressure being exerted against us in a negative direction. I liken it to the undertow of the tide as it washes over a beach. When the tidewater comes up onto the beach there is a force that pushes against you toward the land. But, the instant that tidewater begins to return back to the ocean a current pulls against you and if you're not careful it will pull you in.

As born again children of God we have within our reborn human spirit the potential for manifesting all of these fruit Paul identified. The problem is that this undertow of life in a fallen world is constantly pulling on us to head in a negative direction away from the things of God. If we allow ourselves to remain focused on the negative we will never experience the benefit of living out our reborn human spirit and the fruit of joy will never manifest.

I don't know about you but I'm ready to have some everlasting joy manifesting in, on, and around me. How can I enjoy the benefit of this now in my life? It won't happen so long as we continue to be overwhelmed with the circumstances of this

world. We have to keep in mind that we are in this world but we are not “of “this world. We have passed from death to life and even though we live in a world filled with death it should not rule us.

Believe me, I know what I am saying is not easy to live. It isn't like we can just flip a switch and turn the world off. So, how can we successfully navigate through this life, with all its ups and downs without allowing what we are experiencing on the outside to get on the inside? We must take a lesson from what Paul and Silas did when they were being held prisoners after being beaten for their testimony for Jesus in Acts 16. (Acts 16:25)

“And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.”

Instead of allowing grief and despair to overwhelm them because of their horrible circumstances, they turned all their attention to the Lord and in so doing the fruit of their reborn human spirit was allowed to manifest until what was on the inside could be seen on the outside. This gave God everything He needed to rock that prison with an earthquake and cause the chains to fall off and the cell doors to open. Let me ask you, if Paul and Silas would have sat there in the mully grubs and focused on “Oh poor me, look at how bad I have it”, do you think they would have seen the salvation of the Lord?

Every circumstance we will ever face can be dominated by us if we will learn to allow what's in us to come out. Give this fruit an opportunity to manifest in you by turning your attention away from the circumstances and on to Jesus. Worship Him and experience the everlasting joy, which is already in you, as it pours out of your reborn human spirit.

~ Jesus Loves You!

Mark Jenkins