

COUNT IT ALL JOY

Introduction

- 1) There is much fear, uncertainty, and hopelessness among those who love this present world
- 2) Christians also face this world's uncertainty, pain, and sorrow, but in very different ways
 - a) With *understanding* (Eccl. 7:2-4), with *help* (1 Pet. 5:6-7), with *hope* (1 Thess. 4:13-14)
- 3) **JOY** is a characteristic of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and should be constant characteristic of our walk in this life (Col. 1:9-12 – understanding, help, and hope)
- 4) What are the *constant* sources of joy for the Christian?

I) FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD

- A) Our joy is full when the joy of the Lord abides in us (Jn. 15:9-11)
 - 1) This comes when we keep His commandments = abide in His love
 - 2) We come to know the joy of Jesus abiding in the Father's love (v. 10)
- B) Fellowship with the Father and Son brings joy (1 Jn. 1:1-4)
 - 1) Through fellowship in truth and the blessings of forgiveness (vv. 3, 7, 9)
 - 2) Christ came into this world to bring the joy of salvation to all people (Lk. 2:10-11)

II) FAITHFUL BRETHREN

- A) Faithful brethren who walk in truth is a source of great joy (3 Jn. 1-4; Phil. 4:1)
 - 1) Unfaithful brethren and worldly problems bring no joy (3 Jn. 9-10; Heb. 13:17)
- B) Knowing we can help one another go to heaven (1 Thess. 2:19-20)
 - 1) Faithful brethren need one another for constant spiritual encouragement and refreshing (Heb. 10:24; 2 Tim. 1:16; 2 Cor. 7:13, 16)

III) EARTHLY TRIALS

- A) We are to "count it all joy" when we fall into various trials (Jas. 1:2)
 - 1) This makes no sense to a worldly mind – paradox of faith in Christ (2 Cor. 12:10)
- B) The testing of faith produces patience [endurance] (Jas. 1:3)
 - 1) Endurance is necessary to be "perfect and complete, lacking nothing" (v. 4)
 - 2) Proves genuineness of our faith (1 Pet. 1:7-9) – inexpressible joy of eternal salvation!
 - 3) Provides opportunity for doing good (Gal. 6:2)

IV) ETERNAL REWARD

- A) What is set before us is joyful glory, just as joy was awaiting Jesus (Heb. 12:2; Rom. 8:18)
- B) Inheritance reserved in heaven for us (1 Pet. 1:3-6)
 - 1) Rejoice because of our faith and endurance in Christ and what will be waiting at the end
 - 2) When Jesus returns, it will be a day of exceeding joy (1 Pet. 4:12-13)
 - 3) Enter into the "joy of your Lord" (Matt. 25:21)
- C) Let us rejoice that our names are written in heaven (Lk. 10:20; Phil. 4:3-4)

Conclusion

We are to be a joyful people in a depressed and distressed world. This is because this world is not our home. Seeing that we dwell in a better kingdom in fellowship with God and faithful brethren, let us rejoice as we press toward the glorious goal of our heavenly prize (Rom. 14:17; 15:13).