

## A Delight in Christ and His Salvation

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In a lesson from a few weeks ago on John chapter 6 I included a short portion from Matthew Henry's commentary on that chapter. There when Mr. Henry was specifically commenting on - '**What is meant by eating this flesh and drinking this blood**' spoken of in John 6:54 Mr Henry brought up 4 points for consideration. Here are those 4 points again -

1. Having an Appetite for Christ
2. Application of Christ to our lives
3. A delight in Christ and his salvation
4. To *feed upon Christ* is to do all *in his name*

In today's lesson our focus will be on the 3rd of these 4 items. 'A delight in Christ and his salvation' of which Mr Henry comments -

**A *delight* in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be *meat and drink* to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must feast upon the dainties of the *New Testament in the blood of Christ*, taking as great a complacency in the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken to redeem and save us as ever we did in the most needful supplies or grateful delights of nature.**

The word 'Complacency' that Matthew Henry uses in his description above has changed in meaning over time. Today it is used with the following definition - a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger, defect, or the like; self-satisfaction or smug satisfaction with an existing situation, condition, etc. But in older times, as in Matthew Henry's day, this word complacency meant - friendly civility; inclination to please; complaisance.

Complaisance defined as -

1. willingness to please; disposition to be obliging and agreeable; affability.
2. an act or instance of this.

Thus combining what Mr Henry had to say about items #1 and #2 above we now add #3 and find that the Message from God is to be good news to us, as pleasant as the finest of foods is to a hungry body.

#1 having an appetite for God, those who thirst and hunger for righteousness will find great joy in God's Word.

#2 application of Christ to our lives becomes as necessary as meat (food) to us. Where as just looking at meat will do our bodies no good, so it is with God's Word. We must consume it!

#3 God's Word 'The New Testament' (New Covenant) in His blood must be as pleasing to us to feed upon (consume) as the finest of foods one could possibly find to feed upon to satisfy one's hunger. For in this Word of God we find so many good things. Oh what a joy it is to those who would hunger and thirst for righteousness. As it was in The Old Testament where God gave them manna to sustain their physical bodies in that barren desert. So it is when God gave His Son, the Word become flesh, to us in the New Covenant to sustain us unto eternal life. Feast therefore on the very Word of God that became flesh and dwelt among us. This salvation given to us from God should be a great delight to us. And not only to us as Paul points out in the following passage.

Paul in Romans 3 gives an answer to the question - *"What advantage, then, is there in being a Jew, or what value is there in circumcision?"* *"Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have been entrusted with the very words of God."*

Here Matthew answers the question - How does one find 'a delight in Christ and His Salvation? - to feast upon those very Words of God.

Some thoughts from Psalm 35, 51 and Isaiah 12 about missing and finding this delight (joy) -

**Psalm 35:1-12**

*"Contend, Lord, with those who contend with me;  
fight against those who fight against me.*

*Take up shield and armor;  
arise and come to my aid.*

*Brandish spear and javelin  
against those who pursue me.*

*Say to me,*

*"I am your salvation."*

*May those who seek my life  
be disgraced and put to shame;  
may those who plot my ruin  
be turned back in dismay.*

*May they be like chaff before the wind,  
with the angel of the Lord driving them away;  
may their path be dark and slippery,  
with the angel of the Lord pursuing them.*

*Since they hid their net for me without cause  
and without cause dug a pit for me,  
may ruin overtake them by surprise—  
may the net they hid entangle them,  
may they fall into the pit, to their ruin.*

*Then my soul will rejoice in the Lord  
and delight in his salvation.*

*My whole being will exclaim,  
"Who is like you, Lord?"*

*You rescue the poor from those too strong for them,  
the poor and needy from those who rob them.”  
Ruthless witnesses come forward;  
they question me on things I know nothing about.  
They repay me evil for good  
and leave me like one bereaved.”*

Now compare the above Psalm with the one below

### **Psalm 51:12-17**

*“Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.  
Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
so that sinners will turn back to you.  
Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
you who are God my Savior,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.  
Open my lips, Lord,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.  
You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.  
My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart  
you, God, will not despise.”*

The portion of Psalm 35 is from a time when David was running from his enemies, being mistreated by them and needed the Lord's help.

The portion of Psalm 51 was from a time after David had sinned with Bathsheba. By the time of the writing of Psalm 51 David has come face to face with his sin through a prophet of God. In this passage David asks for two things -

1. Restoration - *“Restore to me **the joy of your salvation**”*
2. A willing spirit to sustain him -

David had lost the joy of God's salvation because he had wandered far away from God by his own sinful actions. When confronted by his sin through the prophet Nathan David had an expectation of dying for his sins as we read in 2nd Samuel 12:13 - *“So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die.”*

But David's sin did result in the death of his own son that he had with Bathsheba and thus much grief came to David's life because of that sin. And so here in Psalm 51 David asks for God to restore the joy of God's salvation to him. Then he asks for a willing spirit to sustain him. And today we have the Holy Spirit as a gift from God to help us.

Conclusion - David's example is the hard way to learn the lesson.

James 1:12-15 tells us - *“Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”*

Israel would also learn many of life’s lessons the hard way. But Isaiah was also given many words of encouragement and promises concerning the messiah which would bring joy not only to the nation Israel but to the whole world. **Isaiah 12** is a song about that.

*“And in that day you will say:  
“O Lord, I will praise You;  
Though You were angry with me,  
Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.  
Behold, God is my salvation,  
I will trust and not be afraid;  
‘For Yah, the Lord, is my strength and song;  
He also has become my salvation.’ ”  
Therefore with joy you will draw water  
From the wells of salvation.  
And in that day you will say:  
“Praise the Lord, call upon His name;  
Declare His deeds among the peoples,  
Make mention that His name is exalted.  
Sing to the Lord,  
For He has done excellent things;  
This is known in all the earth.  
Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion,  
For great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!”*

The following is a lesson I came across and would like to share this morning with you. It ties the message of hope and joy found in Isaiah 12 to many other passages in scripture. Here are that author’s words -

‘Isaiah 12 is a short song of praise focused on salvation. If we read this chapter with narrowed vision we will see it only as a reference to the restoration of the Jewish exiles to Jerusalem after their years of captivity in Babylon. But there is far more than that here when we look at it from the perspective of the eternal spiritual reality brought into human history by the saving death of Jesus Christ. From this eternal and global perspective we find in this chapter:

Propitiation - the turning away of God's anger [verse 1].

'Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away and you have comforted me.'

That wrath of God that is upon all humans because of our wickedness and godlessness [Romans 1:18] has been turned away from those who believe in the name of God's Son, Jesus Christ [John 3:36]. Those who through faith are justified by the death of Christ are saved forever from the wrath of God [Romans 5:9]. Jesus rescues us from the wrath to come [1Thessalonians 1:10], for God has appointed those who believe in Jesus for salvation, not for wrath [1Thessalonians 5:9]. As Isaiah states: 'Although you were angry with me, your anger has turned away' with the result 'you have comforted me'. Christians live in the strong comfort and assurance of reconciliation with God. In this state of reconciliation, where sin and judgment have no further power or authority to interfere and to accuse, there is a state of perfect peace between God and man [2Corinthians 5:17-21; Colossians 1:20-22]. There is no more fear of God's judgment [1John 4:16-18]. There is no more fear of rejection by God.

Salvation – Isaiah knows, and the rest of the Scripture testifies, that God himself is salvation [verse 2].

'Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid.

The LORD, the LORD, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation'

Salvation is not in personal strength or personal merit. Salvation is not in racial or religious heritage or affiliation. God, and God alone, is both the Saviour and the salvation he gives. Moses sang about this, indeed it was his song that Isaiah quotes in this verse [Exodus 15:2]. David knew this when he acknowledged God as his 'my strength ... my rock ... my fortress ... my deliverer ... my shield ... the horn of my salvation ... my stronghold' and 'my light and my salvation' [Psalm 18:1,2; 27:1]. Jeremiah drew attention to it by the phrase 'the LORD Our Righteousness' [Jeremiah 23:6; 33:16]. Paul understood this when he referred to the Lord Jesus Christ as our 'righteousness, holiness and redemption' [1Corinthians 1:29]. This salvation is 'in Christ Jesus' not something separate from him [2Timothy 2:10]. For this reason 'he who has the Son has life' [1John 5:12].

Joy – the truth that God himself is our salvation is the unfailing source of joy [verse 3]:

'With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.'

It was with this joy that Moses sang to the Lord on the eastern shore of the Red Sea [Exodus 15:18]. It is this joy of the Lord that Nehemiah affirmed is our strength [Nehemiah 8:10]. It is this joy that should characterize all who trust in the name of the Lord [Psalm 5:11] in whose presence is absolute joy [Psalm 16:11]. This joy experienced by those who are redeemed by God is an everlasting and overpowering joy [Isaiah 35:10] that overrides all sorrow and sighing. Indeed, this joy is the very essence of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, dispelling that terrible fear that prior to the Gospel was the only logical response of the sinful human heart in the presence of God [Luke 2:10]. Because the Lord who is its source and on whom it focuses is infinitely indescribable and glorious this joy of the redeemed is also inexpressible and full of glory [1Peter 1:8].

Worldwide praise – this salvation brought to us by the Son of God is too grand and glorious thing to be limited to one nation [Isaiah 49:6]. Isaiah commands that the name of the LORD and the glorious things he has done must be made known all round the world [verses 4 to 6].

This worldwide praise expressing the joy of the redeemed is even now spreading around the world as the Gospel of light and truth invades the darkness, and it is both now and in the final state the reality described in Revelation:

‘After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” ... ’ [7:9,10,14].

‘... and they sang the song of Moses ... and the song of the Lamb:  
“...Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name?  
For you alone are holy.  
All nations will come and worship before you,  
for your righteous acts have been revealed” [15:3,4]

These are the songs and this is the joy and the praise of those from all the earth who are saved by Jesus.’

I found this article to be a powerful reminder of the wonderful message God has for mankind. The message of salvation through Jesus The Christ. Something we should delight in. There are of course many more passages in Scripture which speak of what Matthew Henry calls ‘a delight in Christ and His Salvation’.