

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

### Chapter 12- Sons of God **1John 2:29-3:3**

#### 94. Our Great Joy- Part 1

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WAOY Wednesday 10/03/07; Thursday 02/09/23

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to begin a new section of our study and look at what John taught about "Our Joy Being Full". So, let's turn in our Bibles and read **1John 2:29- 3:3** together:

**29** If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him.

**3:1** See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.

**2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.

**3** And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

From the very first part of this Epistle, John's purpose of writing is that all those who read this letter would have a full joy. That is what he said in **1John 1:4**:

**These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.**

Indeed, every aspect of the Christian life is not so that we may be bound in endless legalistic rules and regulations that weigh us down and sap our life and our love and our joy, but every requirement of God; every warning against sin; every rebuke of unrighteousness is designed solely to give the believer access to the fullness of joy that only God can give through Jesus Christ and to allow the believer the glorious opportunity to *remain* in that joy.

When John tells us under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the sole purpose of his writings is that our joy may be full- he is only repeating the very same desire that Jesus Himself expressed in **John 15:11:**

**These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.**

And again, in **John 17:13:**

**But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.**

Again, I want to express to you that the hallmark of Christianity; the distinguishing difference between those who are saved and those who are not saved is not speaking in tongues; it is not our thundering prophecies; neither is it our opposition to the sins of our society. No, the unarguable proof; the unmistakable fruit that those who have trusted Christ for Salvation are indeed born of God and have been adopted into the Heavenly family is their overwhelming and abiding Joy.

Christians absolutely have Joy regardless of their circumstances because the joy that Christians possess is based upon their relationship to God through Jesus Christ- and not what goes on in the lost world around them. Christians do not lose this kind of deep abiding Joy simply because they had a bad day or because they lost something dear to them or because they don't get what they want. The Joy that is possessed only and solely by Christians and the Joy that does indeed possess Christians is not an earthly joy- but a Joy that belongs *to* God and a Joy that comes *from* God and Joy that is intrinsically wound around the very Person of God and a Joy that God gives to all of those who have been adopted into His Family through a real and personal and powerful relationship with Jesus Christ.

There are many things that give us seasons of human joy on this earth and those things are good and those things are gifts to us by a wonderful God that loves us. These things are temporary examples of the permanent Joy that resides inside the very core of God. The laughter of a child; the humor of a good joke; the security and love of our own human family- all of these and many more are not the Joy that John and Jesus are referring to and should never be confused with that permanent

spiritual and holy Joy- but they are beautiful and wonderful reminders of that heavenly Joy and thus are good.

But we must remember that all joy that comes from this earth is temporary, and all human joy is based upon human relationships that change over time. Do we not know that some human relationships become better over time while other relationships become worse with the passing of time. Human relationships change because people change.

But those who are saved and who follow Christ are being change from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. They are putting on more and more of the attributes of Christ Himself and are becoming more and more like Jesus. Those who are unsaved and who walk after the counsel of their own will are also being changed. They are putting on more and more of the fallen sinful world and they are becoming more and more like it.

If you are saved and you and have a relationship with someone who is not saved- then you two are headed in opposite directions. You are following Christ and they are following their own lusts and desires and this relationship is doomed to fail. The only reason that a saint and a sinner can get along is if one of them gives up and goes in the other one's direction. Either the saint must backslide and go with the sinner, or the sinner must get saved and follow Christ. But somebody has to move. So, if my joy is based upon someone who is not saved; or if my joy is based upon something that is sinful- then I am doomed to lose my joy- unless they get saved or unless I refrain from participating in that which is wrong.

If my joy is based upon how well I am treated at work or how much money I have or how good I look, then I am going to lose that joy sooner or later because sooner or later someone at work will treat me badly; or I will not always have as much money as I do now; or I will one day wake up and look like I do now. Anyone can have that kind of shallow, fleshly, temporary joy and everyone who has that joy sooner or later will have that joy grow weak or in some way diminish- depending on the circumstances.

But thanks be to God that the Joy that comes from God is not shallow- it is deep. It isn't fleshly- it is heavenly. It isn't temporary- it is permanent. This godly Joy isn't based upon human relationships or monetary considerations and other human beings and other conditions have no effect upon it.

Jesus was possessive of this kind of Joy- He said that it was His. It is a holy Joy- a righteous Joy- a permanent Joy- because this Joy does not originate from us- it comes from God Himself. But although this Joy does not originate from us- it nevertheless can really and actually belong to us.

You see, you and I are allowed to take full possession of this Joy. We are allowed to walk in it and run with it and climb with it and we are given the high honor of not only coming into physical contact with this Joy, but we are given the privilege of keeping it. Jesus said that His joy would remain with us.

Ah, but what is the catch? In order to have this Joy- you must belong to God. You must have your black heart washed in red Blood and be made whiter than snow. You must be born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible seed. You must be regenerated and changed by a supernatural miracle of God from the vile person that you once were to the new man that is created in righteousness and true holiness. You must not simply be an improved version of the old man, but you must come in contact with the One Who is Absolute and Eternal and Who can save you to the uttermost. Because you see, only those who are saved can have this joy. Only those who are washed in the Blood of the Lamb can take ownership of this Joy. Only those who are sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise; those who are endued with Power from on high; those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes can have this Joy inside their being.

This Joy makes everything that you go through- worth it. This Joy is what keeps us; it is what sustains us; it is what enables us; it is what thrills our hearts and makes our soul sing; This Joy is what captured my heart; This Joy won me over. To know that all of my obedience; all of my struggles; all of my testing and all of my trials are simply opportunities for me to keep the Joy that Christ gave to me. They are opportunities to allow that holy Joy to grow more rich and more profound in my heart and they afford me the opportunity to allow that Joy to encompass more and more of my life until this Joy fills me up and overflows.

This Joy came to me the very moment that I met Jesus as a sixteen year old boy. It flooded my soul and overwhelmed my life. This Joy has grown and become more and more profound in my heart since that day, but I tell you that it has never left. This Joy has been the hallmark of my life. Those that know me speak of my Joy. I can't take credit for it-

because I didn't create it, nor did I obtain it through my own efforts. This Joy is a gift to me from a loving Father that gave His only begotten Son to live and die and live again for me. But although I didn't create it- this Joy is mine. It is mine because Jesus is mine and I am His and we share this Joy together and as deeply as I allow Christ to abide within me- the Joy also abides.

I have not lived one day since the day that I surrendered my life to Christ that I have not known this Joy. It kept me going when things got very hard. It allows me to rejoice in temptation. It causes me to sing when others cry. It gives me comfort when tragedy strikes, and it makes me dance with all my might when I spend time with Jesus alone.

It is not Glory that motivates me- it is this Joy. It is not the money, nor the fame, nor the recognition that keeps me going. I am motivated because of this Joy, and I am kept because of this Joy. This Joy grows in me when I am obedient, and this Joy becomes full when Christ abides. I run away from sin because I do not wish to lose this Joy. I run toward God's righteousness because I want more of this Joy. Christ Himself was able and willing to endure the Cross because of this Joy.

John is quick to inform us that his desire is that all who read this letter have joy in fullness. So, because that is true, John is careful to tell us that there are certain things that we must do and certain things that must not do if we are to keep this Joy inside and allow it to be full.

We must follow Christ if we are to keep this Joy. The only way that we know that we are following Christ is that we obey the Words of this Book. John said that no one can keep the Joy of the Lord and walk in disobedience to this Word. That is why John and Paul and Peter and all of those faithful men who bring to us the Word of God constantly emphasize obedience to God as the cornerstone of Christianity. Salvation does not exist apart from faithful obedience. Salvation makes obedience possible. Obedience allows the Joy to flow. So those who obey are those who possess true Joy. Those who disobey are those who have no joy. Since obedience comes from having received Power and only those who are saved can receive Power, only those who are in the family can possess this Joy.

John said that we cannot love God whom we have not seen and not love our brother whom we do see. All those who are in the family love all those who are in the family. When we are at odds with another brother or sister- we lose our joy. We lose our joy because we are at odds with

God. Only by reconciling with our brother can we regain the joy that is lost through sin.

John said that if we love the world, the love of the Father is not in us and therefore the Joy will not be in fullness. The only way to regain the fullness of Joy is to obey God and be separated from the world and then the Joy can flow.

John is careful to tell us that to belong in the family of God means something. Being in the family means more than simply going to church a couple of times each week. Christianity involves us getting to know each other intimately so that we know how to pray and how to encourage each other. It is my prayer that you all develop a strong fellowship that allows the Love and Joy to flow between you.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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