

Galatians 5: 22 – “The Believer’s Joy”, Message # 43 in the series – “Christ has Set us Free”, a Bible Study conducted on September 2nd, 2015, by Pastor Paul Rendall at his home.

It ought to be evident to everyone reading this verse that since love is the grace which is set at the head of the list, that it is the most important of the graces. Without love we are nothing, it says in 1st Corinthians 13: 2. The reason that love is set at the head of the list is because it is out of the exercise of a love for God and man, that all the rest of these graces listed are also exercised in a coordinating way to glorify God. After all, the first and greatest commandment is that you shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, and soul, and mind and strength; and the second is like it, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. For upon these 2 commandments hangs the whole law of God; everything that He expects of us flows from this. And we are told here that joy is highest up in the list of graces which go along with love as a fruit of the Spirit. When we love God with all of our heart we will also manifest the fruit of the Spirit which is joy. So, the question of this evening is this: How can I be a truly joyful Christian? In answering that question I want us 1st of all to see, that it is Christ, who, through the working of His Holy Spirit, gives the believer the real joy which is glorifying to God. And 2nd – I want us to see that it is the grace of joy which enables the believer to fulfill his duties to God and man with delight. May our Lord help us to see the connections in truth tonight which will help us to manifest the fruit of the Spirit which is joy.

1st of all - I want you to see that it is Christ who, through the working of His Holy Spirit, gives the believer the real joy which is glorifying to God.

Turn with me over to Romans 5, verse 8. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” “Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.” “For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” “And not only that, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” It is because we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we have been reconciled to God. It is because He has undertaken to become our mediator and satisfied all of the righteous expectations of God in relation to each and every believer. He undertook to fulfill all of God’s law; all of its righteous requirements, He obeyed them perfectly on our behalf. In terms of our having broken God’s holy law, He undertook to go to the cross and lay down His life on our behalf; to suffer and die in our place. All of God’s righteous wrath which was due to our sins fell upon Him there. This is why we have such a joy which is different from the people in the world who do not know God, and the only joys that they know are related to earthly and sinful pleasures. The Christian has true spiritual joy in having come to know God; having been brought into the kingdom of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ. We rejoice in God the Father’s great plans and purposes; that He would send His dear Son, love us while we were still sinners, and reconcile us when we were enemies through Christ’s death. If this is the case, it says in verse 10, “much more will we be saved by His life”.

That is, we shall not only be saved from the eternal sorrows and misery of hell by Christ’s death; that we shall be saved from, but we shall be saved from the sorrow which comes to us from the guilt and pollution of remaining corruption by His life. Christ has given us His Holy Spirit who gives us spiritual life, and a part of that spiritual life is joy. Verse 11 says: “And not only that, but we rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” This is the basis of all of our joy as Christians; that we have been reconciled with God, that we have come to know God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we now have His Spirit dwelling in our heart producing this fruit of love in our heart which

translates over into our lives. Turn with me over to 1st Peter 1, verses 8 and 9. “Whom having not seen you love.” “Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith – the salvation of your souls.” The salvation of our souls comes about when we place our faith in Christ. But this faith continues on from day to day even though we do not see Christ. Since we have believed in Him, He has entered our hearts in the Person of His Holy Spirit; and it is the Holy Spirit’s working in our hearts to direct our attention to all that Christ has done for us and is doing for us by His grace. This causes joy inexpressible to well up in our hearts, thinking of His great love for us, and that He forgives all of transgressions, trespasses, and sins, and is purifying our hearts day by day in order that we will be changed to be more like Him. It is our fellowship with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit which gives us such joy; the contemplation of the holiness, the righteousness, the greatness, and the goodness of God through Jesus Christ to us at all times, now and forever.

Turn with me over to Romans chapter 14: 17. “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” We have not been saved simply to live to ourselves, but we have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God’s dear Son. His is a kingdom of righteousness. It is for us to learn and do what is right by His Spirit’s wisdom and power. It is a kingdom of peace where we learn to love other people and to become peacemakers in the way that we interact with them. It is a kingdom of joy in that we have joy in the fact that He is a good and gracious God and that He rules over us having thought over everything that would be for our good and His glory ahead of time, and so we know that He will cause all things to work together for good to the person who loves Him and who is called according to His purpose. Turn with me over to Philippians chapter 1, verses 3-5. “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now.”

The apostle Paul was a man of prayer. He would thank God upon every remembrance of the believers there in the church at Philippi. He would make his requests for them to grow up in their relationship with Christ, with joy because He knew that they had him in their heart too; even though he was imprisoned at the time of the writing of this epistle. Let us ask ourselves whether we still have joy in the Lord, even when things are not going well for us, even when unrighteous people have had us put in prison, or into some prison like experience, and we cannot understand when we will be released from it. What was Paul to do, and what would he have the disciples at Philippi to do? Well, turn over to Philippians 4, verse 4. Here is what he would do. “Rejoice in the Lord always.” “Again I will say, rejoice!” This is the wonderful privilege of those who know Christ. To have joy, and as it says in verses 6 and 7 – They can be “anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

So, let us understand that even when sinful and ungodly people are oppressing us or persecuting us, we can still know the reality of this joy in our hearts. Turn with me over to Psalm 43, verse 1 – “Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!” “For You are the God of my strength; Why do You cast me off?” “Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” “Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!” “Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your tabernacle.” “Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy; and on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God.”

“Why are you cast down, O my soul?” “And why are you disquieted within me?” “Hope in God; for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God.” You can see that the psalmist is mourning because of the oppression of the enemy, and he needed his cause to be

vindicated. He prayed for God to bring light and truth to illumine his mind on what he should do; how he could come back and worship at Mt. Zion, at the tabernacle of God. He had been driven away from there by his persecutors. And it caused him to be “cast down” in his mind and his heart and his countenance. He knows that when God acts on his behalf he will be brought back to the place of worship, where he could offer the sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving. He would then be able to go to the altar of God, and worship God whom he calls in verse 4 – “his exceeding joy”. Let us ask ourselves tonight whether we have come to see our God in this holy way – as our exceeding joy? Does the Lord Himself, the promises of His Word, and the encouragement of His Spirit cause you to think this way? Do you have real joy in your heart tonight knowing that God Himself is your all sufficient portion in this life and the next?

Then 2nd - I want us to see that it is the grace of joy which enables the believer to fulfill his duties to God and man with delight.

James Gardiner in his Christian Cyclopedia says that joy is “a delight of the mind, arising from the consideration of a present, or assured, approaching possession of a future good.” “When it is moderate, it is called *gladness*; when raised on a sudden to the highest degree, it is then call *exultation* or *transport*; when we limit our desires by our possessions, it is *contentment*; when our desires are raised high, and yet accomplished, this is called *satisfaction*; when our joy is derived from some comical occasion or amusement, it is *mirth*; if it arise from considerable opposition that is vanquished in the pursuit of the good we desire, it is then called *triumph*; when joy has so long possessed the mind that it is settled into a temper, we call it *cheerfulness*: when we rejoice upon the account of any good which others obtain, it may be called *sympathy*, or *congratulation*.” (End of quote) But I would say that the grace of joy is a delight of the mind and heart in thinking upon Christ and all that He has done, is doing, and all that He will do for us, both ourselves, and all Christians which make up His Church. This holy joy is what allows us to fulfill all of our duties to God and man with delight.

Let’s look together at what Christ has done for us that gives us joy. John chapter 16, verses 19-24. “Now Jesus knew that they desired to ask Him, and He said to them, “Are you inquiring among yourselves about what I said, ‘A little while, and you will not see Me; and again a little while, and you will see Me?’” “Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.” “A woman, when she is in labor, has sorrow because her hour has come; but as soon as she has given birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world.” “Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.” “And in that day you will ask Me nothing.” “Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.” “Until now you have asked nothing in My name.” “Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” Jesus was going to the cross, and this was going to cause the disciples great sorrow, but as He said, their sorrow would be changed to joy after his labors on the cross and His death for our sins, when He was raised from the dead. This they did not understand at the time of His speaking this. But they did come to have great joy indeed when after He was raised from the dead, and after He ascended to the Father, His intercession for all of His people would begin. Then, in that day, they would ask and receive answers to their prayers, and their joy in what He had done for them and what He was doing for them, would be full.

The same can be ours today because of all of what Christ has done for us in His purchase of redemption and all the blessings of salvation being conveyed to us, in accordance with our prayers. This joy also extended to all of the labors of the apostles for their Lord, just as they extend to our labors for Christ as well. “Look over at John 15, verses 9-17.” “As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love.” “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love.” “These things I

have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.” “This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.” “You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.” “No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.” “You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” “These things I command you, that you love one another.” This is how you show your love to Jesus for all that He has done for you in purchasing redemption for you through His sufferings. It is to keep His commandments. In this way, He says, you abide in His love, just as when He abode in His Father's love, He kept all of His commandments. Jesus kept all the commandments of God's law perfectly out of love for God and love for you. You will keep Christ's commandment of love. John Gill says on verse 10 – “Not that their continuance in the heart's love and affection of Christ depended upon their observation of his commands; for as the keeping of them is not the cause or reason of the saints having an interest in the love of Christ, so it is not the cause or reason of their abiding in it; but to such that observe the commandments of Christ he will continue to make further discoveries of his love, and let them see more clearly and largely what a value he has for them, and how much he loves them. (End of quote) Let us realize that there is great joy in the further discoveries of Christ love to us which based upon whether we will abide in His love. The fruit of the Spirit is love and joy.