

The Joys of Being a Christian

- Many, if not most, of the lessons given from the pulpit on Sunday mornings have been, in many ways, to warn us of being on the wrong side of God's word. And there's nothing wrong with that because if we love each other we are truly going to caution one another on the dangers of failing to live Christ-like in this present world. The examples we have, from Noah to the apostle Paul, help us understand the importance of Biblical teaching and preaching. Even today it weeds out false doctrines that would only serve as sinful "leaven" to affect negatively "the whole lump" (*1 Cor 5:6*). Spiritual growth, "*separating the men from the boys*" so to speak, is much more important than numerical growth. One saved and productive, growing soul is worth more than all the wealth on Earth that has caused so many to be lost. That said, the lesson for today isn't to be taken as another warning about being outside of Christ, but as a proclamation of what it means to be **in** Christ and enjoying the benefits found therein.

Knowing and Enjoying the Promises

Joh 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. 2 In My Father's house are **many mansions**: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go **to prepare a place for you**. 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also. (*Emp. Added*)

- In His Father's house there are many dwelling places but none that were prepared for the bride of the Son of God. She isn't just any bride so Jesus went to prepare another dwelling place specific to the glory and honor of her presence. These are the words that Jesus spoke to His disciples then but they apply to all the faithful saints since. He will come again for us!

1Th 4:16 For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead **in** Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we (*speaking of the faithful Christians that will be alive the moment this all happens*) which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore **comfort** one another with these words. (*Emp. Added*)

The Hope of the Resurrection

Psa 2:7 I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto Me, Thou *art* My Son; this day have I begotten Thee.

- Jesus has always existed with God as the Son in the Godhead. It was on the day of His baptism in the Jordan River (*Mat 3:16-17*), while dwelling in the body that God prepared for Him, in which He (*Heb 10:5*) "took on the seed of Abraham" (*Heb 2:16*) that He became the "Son of man" in order "to save that which was lost" (*Mat 18:11*). In our baptism we receive the "power (*Gk.1849- privilege*) to become the sons of God" (*Jn 1:12*). He went on to die, be buried and resurrected becoming the "first begotten of the dead" (*Rev 1:5*) of which His faithful would follow.

1Jn 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called **the sons of God**: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. (*Emp. Added*)

Joh 1:12 ... as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on His name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Joh 3:5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of **water** (*baptism*) and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (*Emp. Added*)

1Pe 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again (*This is the “rebirth” Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus in Jn.3*) unto a lively hope (*not a dead hope*) **by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead** (*what our hope is based upon*), 4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are kept by the power of God (*the gospel- Rom 1:16*) through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (*Emp. Added*)

- What hope would we have if Jesus never became one of us to live as we live, to be tempted as we are tempted yet without sin (*Heb 4:15*) and then to die for our sins and to be risen from the dead? We would be “of all men most miserable” (*1 Cor 15:19*). It is through the resurrection that we receive the undecaying, pure and lasting inheritance that is being held for us right now in Heaven! Unlike reservations we make on earth that can be lost because of some human error, what keeps our reservation on schedule is our continual conviction in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Joh 11:25 Jesus said unto her (*Martha*), I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?

- One of the joys of being a Christian is knowing beyond a shadow of doubt that when the physical body of a saint dies the soul of that person continues to live on in “*sleep mode*” until Jesus returns for His resurrected bride. If we believe **in** Christ we will live **in** Him.

Gal 3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as have been **baptized into Christ have put on Christ**. (*Emp. Added*)

We Victory Have In Christ

1Co 15:54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, **Death is swallowed up in victory**. 55 O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? 56 The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law. 57 But thanks *be* to God, Who gives us the **victory through our Lord Jesus Christ**. (***Our victory comes from no other source!***) 58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is **not in vain in the Lord**. (*Emp. Added*)

The Rewards

- No, we don’t earn our salvation. But we do understand that there are rewards for the faithful that labor diligently in the kingdom.

Mat 5:9 Blessed *are* the peacemakers (*these are the ambassadors who share the gospel of peace that reconciles man with God through Jesus Christ*): for they shall be called the children of God. 10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 11 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Act 5:41 And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were **counted worthy to suffer shame for His name**. 42 And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ. (*Emp. Added*)

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *His* purpose. *So...*

Col 3:23 ... whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Rev 22:12 And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. 13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. 14 Blessed *are* they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The Fellowship

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship (*Gk.2842-participation*) with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your **joy may be full**. (*Emp. Added*)

- Fellowship is more than just two fellows in a ship. The apostles had personally participated with Jesus during His earthly ministry and shared that “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:18) with us through their inspired words as per Jesus’ prayer to the Father shortly before His crucifixion.

Joh 17:8 For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me.

Joh 17:20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me **through their word**; (*Emp. Added*)

- As Christians our joy is full, knowing we also participate in fellowship with Christ every time we meet and especially “upon the first day of the week, when the disciples come together to break bread” (Act 20:7).

Mat 18:20 For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.

Mat 26:29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.

- Since no scripture records Jesus ever having communed physically with His apostles once the church was established (*on Pentecost*) it can be understood that He was spiritually in their midst then, as He is now in our midst, since the kingdom came in 30 AD. Along with the happiness of communing together in the assembly is the joy we have of mentioning His name to others. And what a name it is!

Act 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Having Protection from God.

Psa 18:2 The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength (*Heb.6697- refuge*), in Whom I will trust; my buckler (*Heb.4043- shield*), and the horn (*Heb.7161- strength*) of my salvation, *and* my high tower.

Nah 1:3 The LORD is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit *the wicked*: the LORD hath His way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds *are* the dust of His feet.

- God has a special place for the innocent.

Luk 18:7 And shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? 8 I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?

Rom 8:30 Moreover whom He did predestinate (*Gk.4309- to limit in advance*), them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified (*Gk.1344- to render just or innocent*): and whom He justified, them He also glorified (*Gk.1392- to render glorious*). 31 What shall we then say to these things? **If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us?** (*Emp. Added*)

Eph 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might. 11 Put on (*our part*) the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

- Our armor consists of truth, righteousness, the gospel of peace, faith, salvation and our only weapon, the word of God. We do not know retreat because we have no back armor. As soldiers of the cross we are always to march forward.

The Friend We Have In Jesus

“What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry Everything to God in prayer!” (Joseph Scriven, 1855 and Charles C. Converse, 1868)

Joh 15:14 Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

- In the context, Jesus was speaking to His soon to be apostles. He went on to tell them that anything they asked the Father through the authority He gave them, His Father would grant according to His will. Today Jesus is our Intercessor through Whom we pray to God. If we continue to obey His commandment to “love one another” (*Jn 13:34*) He will continue to intercede for us at the right hand of the throne in Heaven.

Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

1Jn 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2 And He is the propitiation (*Gk.2434- atonement*) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

Because We Were Washed!

Act 8:36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and **he went on his way rejoicing.** (*Emp. Added*)

- The ultimate joy of being a Christian is to know that our sins have been hid in Christ's blood and will be as long as “we walk in the light, as He is in the light” (*1 Jn 1:7*). We gave up the old worldly ways that kept us from experiencing the hope we have in Christ.

1Co 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Rev 1:4 John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before His throne; 5 And from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins in His own blood,** 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him *be* glory and dominion **for ever and ever.** Amen. (*Emp. Added*)

Knowing the Eternal Nature Jesus

- It is this fact that is truly a blessing. Knowing that our Saviour existed long before “anything made that was made” (*Jn 1:3*). We often celebrate the longevity of businesses, historic places and nations, along with the earth, sky and seas, but those things are all temporal. Isn't it great to know and have a relationship with the One Who has not only endured all these things but has actually created them?

Psa 102:25 Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens *are* the work of Thy hands. 26 They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: 27 But Thou *art* the same, and Thy years shall have no end.

Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Rev 22:13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

- Do you not know the joy of being a Christian according to the New Testament? Do you believe you are a Christian because of something someone else told you? Why not go to the source for the truth of what it means to be a true Christian according to inspired writings.

1Jn 5:13 These things **have I written** unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that **ye may know** that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. (*Emp. Added*)

#1. Have you heard?

Romans 10:14 ..."how shall they believe in Him **Whom they have not heard?**"

#2. Do you believe?

Heb 11:6 ..."for he that commeth to God **must believe that He is...**"

#3. Have you repented?

Act 3:19 ..."**Repent** ... be converted, that your sins may be blotted out..."

#4. Have you acknowledged Christ as the Son of God, Who alone can save you?

Joh 14:6 I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.

#5. Have your sins been washed away?

Rom 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

Mar 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

#6. If you've done all these things, have you remained faithful?

Romans 6:4 "...we also should walk in newness of life."

#7. Are you Growing

2Pe 3:18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and forever. Amen.

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