



Tim Pauley
PO Box 58403, Charleston, WV 25358
304.767.8430
tim.pauley@capitolcom.org

Rejoice in the Lord!

John 17:13

There are a lot of words we could use to describe life and work in the West Virginia state capitol. I am not sure JOY would always be one of them. There is the ever constant concern with election or reelection to office. There is the framework of competition and conflict found in our system of two party politics. There are the strong emotions involved in dealing with a large number of issues. There are tremendous challenges associated with changes in the capitol such as we saw this past election. Add all that to the challenges and trials we all face in our daily lives. In the middle of all this, can someone really find joy in their life and in the statehouse?

As we continue our study of "The Real Lord's Prayer", in John 17:13 we find the answer is a resounding "YES!" Jesus prayed that we might have joy. Jesus prayed His prayer in the hearing of His disciples so that they might have joy. This prayer was recorded for us in scripture so that we might have joy. If Jesus prayed so that we might have joy, let us consider how we might indeed experience the joy of the Lord in our lives.

In the "Real Lord's Prayer", we find Jesus praying to the Father in the hearing of His disciples. This is only hours before His arrest, trial, and crucifixion. In John 14-16 He has shared with them the disturbing words that He is going away. Even as He is preparing to leave them, He prays that they might have joy:

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. (John 17:13)

Jesus was leaving them in a world that hated them; in a world that would seek to persecute and kill them. Yet He prayed that His joy might be "made full" in them. This simply means Jesus desired their joy to be realized, complete, and abounding in their lives. This subject was certainly important to Jesus as He shared with them just a short time before in John 16:

***20 Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; you will grieve, but your grief will be turned into joy.
21 Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the***

anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. 23 In that day you will not question Me about anything. Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you. 24 Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full. (John 16:20-24)

Jesus finishes His message of encouragement to His disciples with these words:

"...Do you now believe? 32 Behold, an hour is coming, and has already come, for you to be scattered, each to his own home, and to leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. 33 These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." (John 16:31-33)

How do we have joy and peace in a difficult world? By believing Jesus and His word. We can find great joy in contemplating what it means in Jesus' prayer. What can we learn from Jesus' prayer for our joy to be made full?

Christians are to Be Joyful People

Obviously, this issue was important to Jesus. He taught and exhorted His followers to have joy. He prayed that we might have joy.

Paul wrote a whole letter whose purpose was largely to encourage believers to be joyful. In the short letter of Philippians “joy” or “rejoice” is spoken of 16 times. There Paul gives the pointed directive,

Rejoice in the Lord always, again I will say rejoice! (Philippians 4:4)

Because of all that Christ has done for us in His perfect life, His suffering and death for our sin, and His resurrection, we always have great reason to rejoice. In rejoicing we bring glory to God. When we fail to rejoice we detract from God’s glory and question His wonderful work on our behalf.

“...If the Lord Jesus Christ has done what he claims to have done, and has come to suffer all that he suffered in this world, to the end that his people might be made different, they are obviously to be a joyful people.”¹

Jesus Christ is the Source of our Joy

Notice how Jesus prays that “**My joy**” might be made full in His followers. First of all, once again we see that Jesus is our example of having and expressing joy, even in the midst of the worst of circumstances. We are urged to consider this in Hebrews 12:2:

...Fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus took ultimate joy in seeking to fulfill God’s will. Even when we do not rejoice as we should, if we have indeed repented and trusted Christ, His perfect rejoicing is credited to us. That in itself is great reason for rejoicing.

Secondly, all that Christ has done, and all that He has given us, is the source of our rejoicing. He

prays, “***...These things I speak...so that they may have My joy...***”

What are “***these things***” Jesus is speaking? The words of this prayer were spoken aloud for the disciples and recorded for us in order to bring us joy. The teaching and promises of John 14-16 were given in order to bring us joy. And ultimately, all the teaching of God’s Word regarding Who Christ is, what He has done for us, and who we are in Him is the source of our rejoice. It is as we meditate on, contemplate, and seek to appropriate “these things” in our lives we will become more joyful people.

Thirdly, the fact that Jesus prayed for us, and continues to pray for us, is a source of great joy for us (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).

Are You a Joyful Person?

So the question for us is, are we joyful people? There are many things that would stifle and steal our joy. We can certainly become more joyful followers of Christ by considering His wonderful prayer for us.

“What a wonderful thing that it is possible for us to live in this world, in a measure, even as the blessed Son of God lived, and that as we do so he is glorified in us.”²

¹ Lloyd-Jones, Martyn (2013-03-31). *The Assurance of Our Salvation (Studies in John 17): Exploring the Depth of Jesus’ Prayer for His Own* (Kindle Locations 4220-4222). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

² Ibid. Location 4343.

BIBLE STUDIES

Thursdays, 12:00 Noon

TREASURER 'S CONFERENCE ROOM
(EB 54 – Basement East Wing)