

“His Joy is Our Strength”
December 16, 2018

The OT word for “JOY” (*chedvah*)- “*joined with One who lives in confident gladness*”

CORE: “*The joy of the LORD is your strength*” (Nehemiah 8:10) is a life-changing truth.
Here’s how it works:

1. His JOY- empowers us to CHANGE

Nehemiah 8:5-12

- They had lived an entire generation w/o hearing the word of the LORD
- They “*assembled as one man...stood all day...listened attentively*”
- As Ezra read, the people wept—deeply convicted of their sin
- His word, like a “*plumb line*” (Amos 7:7), revealed their lack of alignment
- Despite the sorrow of realizing they had missed God’s best for them—**defying God’s commands** and **breaking His heart**, He said, “*This day is sacred to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep...Go and enjoy (a feast) Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*” (Nehemiah 8:9,10)
- They feasted for a week—before a day of solemn assembly when they confessed and turned from their sins.

Why did God command them to feast first?

- He called them to live in joyful anticipation of the change that was about to happen!
- God gave them **access to His joy—the key to new strength!!!** (NOTE: JOY empowered Jesus to endure the cross- Hebrews 12:12)
 - **Happiness is superficial**—it merely responds to what’s happening.
 - **But JOY is supernatural**—it initiates CHANGE!
- Weeping and rejoicing both have their place.
 - “*Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.*” (Psalm 30:5)
 - “*What tears are to repentance—laughter is to salvation.*”-Bill Johnson
 - David, in a time of deep repentance, prayed, “*Restore to me the joy of Your salvation!*” (Psalm 51:12)
 - **Isaiah 12:3-** “*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.*”

2. His JOY- inspires us to HOPE

Nehemiah 8:12- “*(They celebrated) with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them!*” (They joyfully anticipated God fulfilling His words!)

- HOPE and JOY work hand-in-hand.
 - “**Hope**” is not “wishful thinking”—it is “**the joyful anticipation of fulfillment!**”

- **His words have power!**
 - **If we couldn't do it—it would be cruel for Him to command it!**
 - When Jesus said, **"Nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37)**, He used the word, **"No rhema"** (Lit.- **"no fresh revelatory word from God comes to you without the power & the potential within that word to fulfill itself"**)
- **The entire book of Nehemiah is a hope-filled testimony to what God can do**
 - **"Nehemiah" means "comforter"** (NOTE: Jesus referred to Himself and the Holy Spirit as **"Comforters"** in John 14:16)
 - **Years of effort had failed to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem—yet Nehemiah led them to rebuild it in 52 days (Nehemiah 6:15)!**
 - **JOY ANTICIPATES!!**

3. His JOY- motivates us to EXPRESS

- **If we want joy—we must want to MANIFEST IT!**
 - Lame man **"walking, leaping, praising God" (Acts 3:8)**
 - Forgiven woman washing Jesus' feet with her tears **(Luke 7)**
 - **Acts 2- 120 people freshly filled with Holy Spirit manifesting joy in the streets**
- **Joy results in rejoicing—but rejoicing increases joy!**
 - The word **"rejoice"** means **"again joy" or "increase joy"!**
- **Rejoicing is not hype or phoniness—it's an authentic expression of a deep work of HS**
 - **Gal. 5- "JOY" is His "Fruit"—growing and expressing the life within!**
 - **FAITH is not FAKE—it's the most authentic thing we can do as BELIEVERS!**
 - **REJOICING is one of the greatest expressions of FAITH! (NOTE: Faith "expresses itself" Galatians 5:6)**

CLOSING

Depression depletes us—His joy strengthens us!

Jesus said, "Receive the joy that I experience (with My Father) so that your hearts will overflow with My gladness!" (John 15:11 TPT & AMP)