

In SPIRIT and TRUTH

“RESTORE UNTO ME JOY”



They that sow in tears shall reap in joy!

This morning I woke up with a song in my heart... ***“Way maker, miracle worker, promise keeper, light in the darkness, my God, that is who you are!”*** Those words from one of my favorite songs, “Way Maker” (by Sinach, a Nigerian singer, songwriter, and worship leader) kept reverberating in my spirit, over and over again. As I thought about it, I knew that they were not just the words to a song, but they were a testimony of God’s faithfulness to me!

Now you try it... just take a moment to consider what was on your heart when you woke up this morning? Was it worry, anxiety, regrets, or fear? Was your mind cluttered with thoughts of

scheduling or sorting through the many things needed to be done... or were you actually tuned in to receive a word from the Lord with peace, joy, and a grateful heart? I believe that our early morning meditations reflect what’s in our hearts, and our hearts eventually determine what we confess from our mouths; for Matthew 12:34, reminds us that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”.

“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.” Psalms 51:12

Today I had a song of praise within me, but this is not always the case. Actually, it was not that long ago when I woke up one morning feeling quite discouraged, because I had allowed the cares of this world to dominate my thoughts. So to regain my peace, I came before the Lord in prayer, asking Him to perform His Word in my life; I literally asked Him to *“restore unto me joy!”* And I truly believed He would! It was then that I also realized that I needed to change my focus from the things going on around me, so I could remember whom I serve! For when I acknowledged Jesus, my Heavenly Father who loves me with an everlasting love and new mercies everyday, then there was no way for the devil to continue to steal my joy!

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In my study of “joy”, I found it interesting that the Bible uses the word **joy** (not happiness) in reference to “the fruit of the Spirit”, and I wondered why. Is there a difference between *being happy* and *having joy*? I’m sure that we all experience some happiness from time to time, because there are many things that can bring us pleasure. However, the Word of God reveals that there is a difference between joy and happiness, and it has to do with the source of joy.

Joy is the Fruit of the Spirit of God

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, JOY, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

JOY is an element of the fruit of the Spirit of God. It is manifested (evident) in those who have received *the Holy Ghost*, which is the spirit of God dwelling in man. And how does one receive the Holy Ghost? You must believe and receive just as the early church did in the beginning, on the day of Pentecost...

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come... they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” Acts 2:1-4

Jesus further expounds in John 15, instructing us to abide in Him so the fruit of joy may *abide* in us. In other words, we cannot have the fruit of joy within us *to remain*, unless the Spirit of God also abides (lives) in us. But when we are in Him, and He is in us, we can then “bring forth much fruit”; but without Him, we can do nothing! (John 15:5)



Joy Strengthens Us in Tribulation

Through the power of the Holy Ghost, we can manifest the fruit of joy to strengthen us in the midst of trials and tribulation. In Acts 16:25, Paul and Silas “prayed and sang praises unto God” while imprisoned! As they praised, the Lord caused the earth to quake, opening the prison doors, freeing them all!

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” James 1:2-4

“...for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Nehemiah 8:10b

Trust God to Restore Your Joy

I believe there is a simplicity in serving Christ, and He expects us to simply obey His Word. Therefore, when I came to realize that I was losing my joy, whenever I prayed, I would “cast all of my cares upon the Lord” (1 Peter 5:7), and *ask Him to restore my joy*. However, I first had to be willing to *repent of my sins*, so there would be nothing to hinder me from receiving of God. Then I had to trust Him to honor His Word as I came before Him with a pure heart.

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*And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: **ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.***

John 16:23-24

“But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.” Psalms 5:11

“O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.” Psalms 25:2

To Receive Joy We Must Renew Our Minds With the Word of God

When we are discouraged and continue to dwell on the problems surrounding us, the more discouraged we will become. This opens the door to the devil to plant doubt concerning our future, and we may begin to lose hope. From my experience, the best thing to do in times of great doubt is to stand firm on God's Word. We must *“put on the mind of Christ”* by applying the Word of God to our situations.

“And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” Ephesians 4:23-24

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Philippians 4:8

WITH GOD ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE

“Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18



We must also continue to walk in the light, as He is in the light ((1 John 1:7); for it is only by the light (which is truth of God's Word) that darkness can be dispelled.

“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” Ephesians 5:8-10

Jesus said, *“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. **These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.**”* John 15:10-11

Now I am not exactly sure when it happened, but all I know is that one day I woke up and realized that God had turned everything around for me! He had completely changed my circumstances, and once again I had joy in my heart, just as I had asked! I know that God alone is able to make “all things work together for (our) good”, for those who love Him and are “the called” according to His purpose (Romans 8:28); so when I put my trust in Him, I am confident that I will not be made ashamed (Romans 10:11). The enemy would have us take our eyes off of Jesus, and what He is able to do, to have us focus on our problems instead, making them seem impossible to overcome. However, we must believe that *nothing* is too hard for God, because He is *omnipotent* and remains *sovereign!*