



# ***SPRING 2020 DEVOTIONAL***

***WEEK 4: June 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>***



**Good Hope Missionary Baptist Church  
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**Monday, June 8, 2020**

### **“Rejoice In The Lord”**

*Whatever happens, my dear brothers and sisters, rejoice in the LORD. I never get tired of telling you these things, and I do it to safeguard your faith.*

#### **Philippians 3:1 (NLT)**

There are many things that affect us in this life: our health, our families, our finances. All can play a part in our everyday mood. At times, depending on what may be happening, we may have happiness ..... or not. When painful or hurtful times take place, it's virtually impossible to be happy. However, in several places in the Bible, the concept of joy, instead of happiness, is spoken of. Joy is an inner gladness or contentment that can persist, regardless of a situation. Joy is a fruit of the Spirit as spoken of in Galatians and therefore given by God.

In Paul's letter to the Believers at Philippi, he consistently reminds them to rejoice. In Philippians 3:1, he specifically says to *“rejoice in the Lord,”* no matter what happens. Even though circumstances may change which can affect our happiness, the God we serve is bigger than any circumstance that we may face. We also must remember that even though good times and bad times may come and go, God remains the same. When we have times that are overwhelmingly good, we must remember that He is the reason for them. The Bible tells us in James 1:17 that, *“every good and perfect gift is from above.”* In contrast, when the trials of this life are piling against us, we must remember that God has promised to never abandon us. Hebrews 13:5

tells us that God will never *“leave us or forsake us.”* If God has said it, He will definitely do it.

When we fall into tough times, it is easy to experience short-term amnesia. We tend to forget whatever trials God has brought us through before. We do not readily recall the countless times that He has been there for us. We tend to mis-remember the details of the seemingly impossible situation that we faced before, only to have another example that *“nothing is impossible with God.”* That is why we need reminders, as Paul is giving to the Philippians, *“rejoice in the Lord.”* The word rejoice simply means to *“feel or show great delight.”* We can always rejoice in the Lord for who He is, what He has done, and ultimately, what He will do. In good times and bad, let us reflect on the God we serve. He is, was, and always will be a mighty good God. It has been quoted, *“a person needs just three things to be truly happy in this world: someone to love, something to do, and something to hope for.”* What a joy it is to know that God fulfills all three Himself.

*“What you see depends not only what you look at, but also on where you look from.” James Deacon*

#### **Where is your JOY?**

– Min. J. P. Whittaker

**Tuesday, June 9, 2020**

## **“Choose Joy Over Worry”**

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!*

### **Philippians 4:4 (NASB)**

In life, accidents happen, and sickness may find us no matter how cautious we are. Even though, this should not stop us from trying to live healthy. Recovering from a serious injury is probably one of the hardest things you could ever experience. You may have to learn to live with permanent changes to your body and you may have to endure limited mobility. This can cause a wide range of other life changing issues. Being injured and off work for several months, could cause job loss which could then cause financial hardship on the family. So now you're not only worried about healing, you are also worried about how your family will be affected, can I pay utility bills, transportation cost, groceries and everything else needed to provide for your family. No matter what kind of challenges you go through in life, we all have something deep within us to get us through.

Philippians 4:4 basically tells us to be joyful in spite of our circumstances. It seems a little strange that Paul would be telling a church to rejoice, while in prison himself. Prisons, as we know are not like being at the country club. You do not have the best amenities and you are not in control. There is always someone telling you what to do. Paul's attitude here teaches us an important lesson. Paul lets us know that our inner attitude does not have to reflect our outward circumstances. Joy comes from an “Inner Peace”, of knowing who you are, whose you are, and why you are the way you are. Paul was full

of joy because he knew that no matter what happened to him, Jesus Christ was with him. It's easy for all of us to get discouraged by unpleasant circumstances in our lives. If you have not been joyful lately, maybe you're not looking at life from the right perspective. Ultimate joy comes from Christ dwelling inside us. Imagine never having to worry about anything. That may seem unimaginable to some of us, as we worry on our jobs, in our homes, and at school. Paul tells us in Philippians 4:6-7 to turn our worry into prayers. Do you want to worry less about circumstances? Then pray more! Whenever you start to worry, stop and pray!

Drawing on Christ's power for strength is necessary for being joyful in spite of whatever you may be going through today.

**Ultimate joy comes from Christ dwelling inside you.**

– Dea. Leneal Wilridge

**Wednesday, June 10, 2020**

## **“Joy Down In Your Heart”**

*Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

### **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)**

As a youth growing up, I remember going to Vacation Bible School as a place of refuge, during the summer months. I learned Bible stories, memorized Scriptures, performed skits, and sang fun and energetic songs. There was a simple,

delightful song that all of us loved to sing. It is titled "I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy Down In My Heart." If you are familiar with it, join in with me, singing the first verse:

*I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart  
Where?  
Down in my heart!  
Where?  
Down in my heart!  
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart  
Down in my heart to stay!*

The reality of today's world often challenges Believers to be cheerful, content and able to keep joy down in their hearts. Counselors have reported that watching the daily news can cause you to develop stress, anxiety, depression and even post traumatic syndrome.

Despite the many negative reports that are shared each day; Christians can be of good cheer regardless of life's circumstances and situations. The apostle Paul wrote; "*Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer*" (Romans 12:12, ESV). He was beaten numerous times, shipwrecked, stoned, snake bitten, imprisoned, along with being naked, tired, hungry and thirsty. Yet, Paul never lost faith in the Lord. He continued to teach and encourage others to do the same.

He also says in Philippians 4:11-13 (ESV), "*Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*"

Like Paul, you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. James, the half-brother of Jesus, admonishes Christ followers to, "*Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing,*" (James 1:2-4, ESV).

It is the Lord's desire that you live a joyful life. Trials will be plentiful but, blessings will be more bountiful. When you are faced with difficulties of all types, the Lord will be with you. He promised never to leave or forsake you. 1 Peter 5:7 instructs you to, "*Cast your burdens on Jesus, because He cares for you.*" In doing so you will experience a peace that supersedes human comprehension.

A consistent prayer life with thankfulness will cause you to develop into a faithful and trustworthy Christ follower. You will understand that every trial, heartache and disappointment is used to glorify God, if you respond in the right way. You will experience joy in helping others overcome the obstacles and hinderances of this world. Your countenance will display the joy of the Lord and you will find yourself singing that simple, delightful song.

*I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart  
Where?  
Down in my heart!  
Where?  
Down in my heart!  
I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart  
Down in my heart to stay*

“A rejoicing heart soon makes a praising tongue.” – Charles Spurgeon

**It is the will of God for us to rejoice always.**

– Sis. Myra Allen

**Thursday, June 11, 2020**

### **“A Willing Heart Gives Cheerfully”**

*Then the people rejoiced because they had given willingly, for with a whole heart they had offered freely to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced greatly.*

**1 Chronicles 29:9 (ESV)**

A whirl of enthusiasm arose around the nation and the world when Obama was elected president. Leading up to his election, a new sense of hope and joy gave way to a record number of people participating in his fundraising efforts. In 2012, his campaign was able to raise more than \$1 billion dollars with an average contribution of \$46.92. The people’s enthusiasm rose because of ongoing discrimination and the failures of past administrations. Anticipating great things, the people responded with energy, excitement and great expectations of a society which might bring about long lasting change.

There was a similar enthusiasm near the end of David’s 40-year reign as king of Israel. However, the people didn’t give

to a man because of his great promises. Instead, the money was given to the Lord. The enthusiasm was based upon God’s proven track record and because of God’s promise to forever establish His kingdom in Israel and to give them rest from all of their enemies. He promised to place a son of David on the throne, subdue their enemies, and to live among them as their God. However, this great promise was contingent upon the people living continually in the presence of God and living according to His will keeping His purpose in mind.

Near the end of David’s life, he called an assembly of all the leaders and communicated the promise and the vision. After blessing the Lord, he reminded the people that this time of peace was brought about after many bloody wars where the Lord defeated neighboring nations. It was David’s desire to honor God by building a permanent house for Him. But because David was a man of war, he was not allowed to build the temple. Instead, Solomon, his son, would rule a united kingdom in peace and build the temple.

Prior to this time, the Ark of the Covenant was housed in the tabernacle, a tent without permanent walls. With a permanent house, the Levites would no longer have to carry it from place to place. The location chosen to build the temple was the place where David repented for calling for a census instead of trusting God to multiply the people. In the temple would be a place to receive wise counsel, as they had done with Moses in the tent of meeting, a place for the priests who would continually worship with sacrifices and offerings, and a place reserved for only those who were prepared to enter into the very presence of the Lord.

**Friday, June 12, 2020**

Today, the presence of the Lord remains crucial for the people of God to receive God's promise and enter into His rest. When Christ was crucified, the veil, which shielded the people from entering into the Holy of Holies, was split and is no longer applicable for a temple building. Instead, those in whom the Holy Spirit indwells have the ability to be in the presence of the Lord at any place or time.

Because we are still looking forward to God's kingdom and one day entering into His rest, believers should purpose in their heart to joyfully contribute to the work of the kingdom, relying upon God's promise to supply every need. Will you embrace God's promise and willingly give to support God's kingdom?

*"Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."*

- Apostle Paul, 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (ESV)

**"A man with a heart for God gives generously and cheerfully."**

- Sis. Lilene Caldwell

## **"The Joy of the Lord is the Source of Your Strength"**

*He continued, "Go home and prepare a feast, holiday food and drink; and share it with those who don't have anything: This day is holy to God. Don't feel bad. The joy of GOD is your strength!"*

**Nehemiah 8:10 (MSG)**

There are times where we may feel tired, beaten, and unhappy with life. Sometimes, our circumstances may leave us puzzled and wanting more. We may feel weak or feel as if our actions separate us from God. The book of Nehemiah reminds believers to stop grieving for their past sins and failures, and to allow the joy of the Lord to strengthen them in their time of weakness.

So, let's define strength in a spiritual sense. God is the Source and Supplier of all spiritual strength, through which Believers can do all that He ask. There is no other strength like the strength that comes from the joy of a relationship with our heavenly Father.

The joy of God is never-ending, steadfast, and fierce. You see, joy extends from a position of peace from the inside, and not our circumstances on the outside. May we not only be marked with hope, but filled with the joy of our heavenly Father, as we allow Him to guide us and speak to us in a world full of trials. God's joy is the substance that our souls need to strengthen us each day in a trouble-filled world. It is an everlasting promise that God is always with us.

In the book of Nehemiah, the nation of Israel had just restored the walls around Jerusalem. It was learning how to dwell in obedience to the word of God. Ezra begins to speak and opens with God's words when the people start to mourn and show shame for their disobedience. In response to their tears, Nehemiah declares publicly "*Go home and prepare a feast, holiday food and drink; and share it with those who don't have anything: This day is holy to God. Don't feel bad. The joy of GOD is your strength!*" (Nehemiah 8:10).

God wants us to be filled with joy that can only come from having a relationship with Him. His joy is our power, might, potency, strength. Did I just use different words with the same meaning? Yes, I want you to understand this one fundamental thing fully. God's joy is to be our STRENGTH; and to see TRUE STRENGTH in a trouble-filled world, you must experience the joy that extends from God.

God wants to be your strength, and He wants you to know joy is a fruit of His Spirit that is available to us. Today, I want to encourage you to have faith in God for His everlasting joy. Begin by reflecting on what concern or affliction is keeping you from experiencing God's joy. Then reflect on the strength that is powered by God's joy by focusing on Psalm 16:8-11.

"I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore, my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence,

with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

**"Joy is prayer, Joy is strength, Joy is love, Joy is a net of love by which you can catch souls." ~ Mother Teresa**

- Dr. Brittney Goodman Pettis