

Joy

The Road To Victory

"When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

In the oldest book in the Bible, God gives us a glimpse of the majestic occasion of His great Day of Creation, and there He sets the tone of His glorious will for His creatures through all the ages of eternity: *"Rejoice...enjoy Him...be glad in the Lord."*

Job's "comforters" had been harassing him with a mixture of manmade philosophy and an occasional theological fact - just as man tries to do today. As a result, what they had to say brought no peace of heart and no real solution to Job's problem.

God allowed them to exhaust their poor, inadequate resources and then cut short their attempts to go further with the rebuke: *"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"* Then comes His humbling summary of the great and mighty acts of Creation and of His omnipotence, in which He gives us this glimpse of His great and glorious purpose of it all – to set the whole of Creation singing the praises of God and shouting for joy.

Even today we miss God's magnificent plan for His redeemed ones. Born-again Christians by the thousands seem to be filled with more FEAR than with joy these days. Their lives are so pitifully lacking in the victory that characterized the lives of Peter and Paul, who continually overflowed with songs of thanksgiving, praise, and joy in the Lord, even when in damp, dark, rat-infested prisons—yes, and amid beatings, continued perils and harassments the likes of which we have never tasted!

We have forgotten that fear is born of unbelief, and that both fear and unbelief are SIN! *"Fear bath torment"* and until it is conquered, we cannot live the life of happy rejoicing that He has commanded.

But how do we begin to live a life of praise, thanksgiving, and joy when we can't seem to do it from the heart? That was my problem. Satan can weave a net of circumstances around you and get such a control of your feelings that it seems impossible to switch to a joyful mood.

One morning when particularly torn with difficulties and problems, I was reading Psalm 100: *"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord... serve the Lord with gladness...come before His presence with singing...Enter into His gates with thanksgiving..."* From the depths of my tortured heart I cried to Him for help: "Lord I know this is Your will, a life of praise and thanksgiving regardless of circumstances, but how, Oh Lord, how do I do it? How can I honestly rejoice when I feel like this?"

How grateful I am for His love and patience with me. He had been trying to get me to come to a place where I would recognize my complete helplessness and inability to do this in MY strength and then He wonderfully unfolded HIS way - so simple, so practical, so sure. He drew my eyes across the page to the 103rd Psalm and kept me meditating on those first few verses. *"Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name..."*

Yes, Lord, but HOW? I read on, "...and forget not all His benefits."

I began to see it. My eyes had been fastened on my problems, not on His benefits. I was like Peter who looked away from Jesus to the boisterous waves and he was afraid and began to sink. Fear is the opposite of faith and it is sin. We must deal with it as unmercifully as we do with any other sin: ask His forgiveness, His cleansing with the precious Blood, and then cast the burden on Him, asking Him to live HIS life of FAITH through you (Gal. 2:20).

I determined to obey Him. I made a list of as many wonderful things that He had done for me as I could remember. I found that God had given me a divine outline in Psalm 103 to use in listing the benefits for which I was to praise Him. First it was for my salvation. I meditated on that for a while.

Where would I be now if He had not sought me out and saved me? What a marvel our salvation is, yet many of us have not thanked Him from the depths of our hearts for it in a long, long time! We take this greatest of blessings for granted after a while, and treat it as something out of date! Jesus wants us to be continually rejoicing in this glorious salvation and what He did at Calvary.

I went on to make a list according to the outline. *"Who healeth all thy diseases... Who redeemeth thy life from destruction. Who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies..."* I ended the list by thanking Him for that great gift of the written Word. Think of the days when none of God's people had the New Testament, or further back yet when all they had was the occasional public reading from some of the books of the Law, but no real glimpses of Calvary! What a blessing is the treasure house of His promises in black and white!

Here is the secret of Joy above all others: Feast on His promises, believe them, and praise Him for them. Then seek diligently the context to see what He asks YOU to do for your part; then in child-like faith and obedience, simply take them as yours, no matter what the "evidence" of the moment might be in cold hard facts. Believe HIM, and by faith, *"Count those things which are not as though they are." It works, try it and see. "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart"* (Psa. 37:4).

— Book Fellowship