

**TEXT: NEHEMIAH 8:1-14**

**Topic: The JOY of the LORD is My Strength!**

SUB-TOPIC: WHAT DOES JOY DO?

**Activity/Prop:**

Please release the balloons into the air each time you feel the JOY of the Lord during this sermon.

**Illustrations:**

*Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., was a member of the U.S. Supreme Court for 30 years. His mind, wit and work earned him the unofficial title of "the greatest justice since John Marshall." At one point in his life, Justice Holmes explained his choice of a career by saying: "I might have entered the ministry if certain clergymen I knew had not looked and acted so much like undertakers."<sup>1</sup>*

Most believers look and live like they were baptized in lemon juicy (Explain the implications)

**2. WHAT DOES JOY DO? (This Joy is a source of Great Strength)**

We will benefit more from JOY when we meditate and consider God’s word, and this will strengthen our inner spirits and indeed our whole beings.

Perhaps one of the most neglected disciplines in the body of Christ these days is that of Meditation.

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<sup>1</sup>Today In The Word, June, 1988, p. 13.

### Consider the following:

- Watch your thoughts; they become words.
- Watch your words; they become actions.
- Watch your actions; they become habits.
- Watch your habits; they become character.
- Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

### What then is meditation?<sup>2</sup>

So Christian meditation is to think deeply about who God is and what He has done, to focus on Him and His Character and His Word. To remember God and His Word, To centre one's thoughts on God, doing it soberly, deeply, and quietly.

How many of us after receiving God's teaching put it on the self, we receive all the right teaching, we receive the truth and we store it in us. We are very orthodox! We keep truth as dead stock!

We are very much like this in other areas of life not just in the spiritual realm.

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<sup>1</sup>Meditate: to engage in contemplation or reflection, to focus one's thoughts on: reflect or ponder over, to plan or project in the mind

Think: to form or have in the mind, to have as an opinion, to regard as or consider, to reflect on or ponder, to determine by reflecting, to call to mind or remember, to center ones thoughts on or form a mental picture of, to have in the mind engaged in reflection, to consider.

Reflect: to think quietly and calmly

Ponder: to weigh in the mind, to think about, reflect on, to think about - especially quietly, soberly and deeply.

### **On Food:<sup>3</sup>**

- *18m tons of edible food is wasted (£23b), we need £20b to feed 150m starving Africans*

### **Clothes:<sup>4</sup>**

- Nearly a million tons of clothes and shoes are thrown away each year in the UK
- The average Briton spends nearly £30k in a lifetime
- 3% of UK household waste is made up of textiles

### **E-Waste:<sup>5</sup>**

*In the UK we throw away at least 1 million tons of electronic equipment a year, including 2.5 million fridges and 5 million television sets. It is estimated this figure could be growing by as much as 80,000 tons a year.*

*I remember when I had to replace my computer recently I had to decide on what spec I should get whether an i5 or i7 processor (+£160), 4GB or 8 GB (+£320), 500 GB 5,400-rpm Serial ATA hard drive or 512 Solid State Drive (+£1,040)*

***Make a comment about greed and wanting more than we actually need, storing stuff that we will never fully utilize!***

As illustrated clearly on the waste on food, clothing and indeed electronic possessions, we

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<sup>3</sup>Source: Food Aware and the Independent

<sup>4</sup>Sources: Times database, Evergreen, War on Want

<sup>5</sup>Source: Environment Agency

like to store and waste stuff in nearly all areas of our lives.

Saints, of what account can this be to you, to store your corn but never grind it for bread, or sow it for more gain?

Example:

### **The Physical Body**

A Balanced diet and a balanced lifestyle (Food, Exercise and Rest and Recovery)

### **The Spiritual Body**

A Balanced spiritual diet of (Worship, Word, Prayer, Fellowship, Service and Sacrifice)

### ***On sacrifice***

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

To be full of Joy we need to apply the teachings of the Bible, this is our spiritual meat. There is absolutely no point in believing the truth (orthodox) if we don't use it, we might as well be heterodox (heretical).

Knowledge of the teaching of the Bible is not enough, in order to know God one must consider, contemplate, and regard the truths they profess to believe deriving benefit from it, growing through it and finding the strength of the Lord.

Now, to meditate on the great truths of salvation (justification, sanctification, glorification

through the blood), of eternal love, of the attributes of God<sup>6</sup>, and the indwelling and perpetual abiding of the Holy Spirit in his people.

To turn over these things is to extract joy from them; and this also is strengthening to the mind.

*Imagine the process used in making quality champagnes (Bolliger, Billecart Salmon, Dom Perignon, I am talking of the Demi-Secs, Reserve, Cuvée, and Vintage) from the Harvesting to First Fermentation, to Blending, to Second Fermentation, Riddling<sup>7</sup>, to Disgorgement and Dosage.*

*Pressing the grapes seeing the champagne flow forth in torrents bringing pleasure to those who partake of it.*

Image the pure joy one would get from meditating on all the riches of God's Word?

This exercise is strengthening, as it is exhilarating.

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<sup>6</sup>God is Almighty, All Powerful, and Sovereign Lord- that is our protection!

God is All Knowing and All Wise- that is our guidance!

God is total Reliable (Immutable) and Faithful- that is our solid foundation!

God is Loving, Merciful, Kind and Gracious- that is our salvation!

[RIHD-ling] Madame Clicquot, a young French widow who took over her dead husband's champagne house in 1805, was the visionary who developed the important riddling procedure—a way to remove dead yeast cells from bottles of sparkling wine made by the méthode champenoise. In the step just before riddling, a bottling dosage (dosage de tirage or liqueur de tirage) and yeast are added to a cuvée (a blend of still wines) to produce a secondary fermentation in the bottle. The sediment that forms during this secondary fermentation is maneuvered into the neck of the bottle and up against the cork or crown cap through riddling (called remuage in France). The riddling process consists of positioning the bottles upside down at a 45° angle in specially built racks called pupitres. Every 3 or 4 days, a trained worker (called a remuer in France) gives the bottles a shake and a slight turn, gradually increasing the angle of tilt and dropping the bottle back in the rack with a slight whack. In 6 to 8 weeks, all the bottles are positioned straight downward and the sediment has collected in the neck. The sediment is then removed by another step called disgorgement. A skilled remuer can handle over 30,000 bottles per day. Although riddling was once done entirely by hand, today many winemakers are employing large metal racks (pioneered in Spain) that hold over 500 bottles. These racks—called girasols in Spain, gyropallets in France, and VLMs (very large machines) in the United States—mechanically perform the riddling process and have dramatically shortened the procedure. Another process being tried is the placement of yeast in calcium alginate beads (also called encapsulated yeasts), which fall to the neck of the bottle immediately when it is turned upside

Joy comes from the same truths, which support our strength, and comes by the process of meditation. \_

Again, "the joy of the Lord" within us is always the sign and symbol of strong spiritual life. We gain joy by being with God and our fellowship and communion with God is the surest fosterer of strength.

You cannot be with a strong God without getting strength yourself, for God is always a transforming God; regarding and looking upon him our likeness changes till we become in our measure like our God.

**Baxendale Residents: Wednesday Morning (Sunshine and Shade)**

A man who walks in the sunlight of God's countenance, for that very reason is warm and strong.

JOY

- Joy strengthens us against temptation

(How can he be tempted- In Christ we have all we need- We has more already than the world can offer as a reward for treachery. We are already rich; who shall ensnare us with the unrighteousness pleasures of this world?) We are already contented; who is he that can seduce him with pleasing baits?

- Joy safeguards us against persecution
- Joy powers us for works of service (What can he not do who is happy in his God?)
- Joy strengthens us for self-sacrifice (To the God who gives him all, and remains to

him as his portion, such a person gives up all that he hath, and thinks it no surrender. It is but laying up his treasure in his own heavenly treasure house, even in the God of his salvation.)

- A joyous person is strong in a calm restful manner and he is not hurried, he trusts God and keeps his eyes fixed on Jesus the author and the finisher of our faith.
- A joyful person is humble, firm and steadfast; he is not carried away with every wind, or bowed by every breeze, he knows what he knows, and holds what he holds, and the divine anchor of his hope enters within, and holds him fast.
- A joyful person's strength is real and not pretentious it comes from our actual eternal loving relationship with a personal God, from our assured future in Him, and from our service for Him.

The (Light within)<sup>8</sup> makes us independent of the outward light, the secret abundant food warehouse make us independent of the worldly harvest, the inward river never runs dry (we will never thirst) we are totally dependent on God our exceeding joy, and interdependent of other believers.

A joyful believer stands where many will fall, sings where many will weep, wins where many will fail, glorifies God where many will bring dishonor to God. Charles H Spurgeon

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<sup>8</sup>The light of heaven is the face of Jesus Christ; the joy of heaven is the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ; the melody of heaven is the name of Jesus Christ. The theme of heaven is the work of Jesus Christ. The employment of heaven is the work of Jesus Christ. The fullness of heaven is the Lord Jesus Christ, himself. ...Anonymous

## CONCLUSION:

*Men have pursued joy in every avenue imaginable. Some have successfully found it while others have not. Perhaps it would be easier to describe where joy cannot be found:*

*Not in Unbelief -- Voltaire was an infidel of the most pronounced type. He wrote:  
"I wish I had never been born."*

*Not in Pleasure -- Lord Byron lived a life of pleasure if anyone did. He wrote:  
"The worm, the canker, and grief are mine alone."*

*Not in Money -- Jay Gould, the American millionaire, had plenty of that. When dying, he said: "I suppose I am the most miserable man on earth."*

*Not in Position and Fame -- Lord Beaconsfield enjoyed more than his share of both. He wrote: "Youth is a mistake; manhood a struggle; old age a regret."*

*Not in Military Glory -- Alexander the Great conquered the known world in his day. Having done so, he wept in his tent, before he said, "There are no more worlds to conquer."*

*Where then is real joy found? -- the answer is simple, in Christ alone.<sup>9</sup>*

My personal experience in July 1994

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<sup>9</sup>The Bible Friend, Turning Point, May, 1993.