

2 Tim 3:16-17 All Scripture is... ..FULLY Equipped. For EVERY good work.

Rom 15:4 ...everything that was written in the past was written to **teach us**,...

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Let us together read Luke 10:16-21 This is a passage rich in preaching opportunities. I could preach on:

v16: that Rejecting the Messenger is rejecting Jesus, but ultimately rejecting God The Father,

v17: The spiritual Authority given to believers – the 72 sent out by Jesus, many to become Early Church Bishops (**HOLD UP Hippolytus List**)

v19: Supposing that all believers are Supernaturally Protected – like the Church of the Snake Handlers Pastor – who died from a snake bite

v20: That we should be busy in the – again: very dangerous - ministry of exorcising demons. Not uncommon in the Early church.

But No, I'm going to dig deeper on a more essential topic of Joy in the Life of a believer – from v21.

Who Better to look to find what He had great Joy in – than Jesus - and seek for Ourselves that Joy that aligns our Worldview with God's!

Isaiah describes Jesus as a man of sorrows - and familiar with suffering in **Isaiah 53:3**

He was despised and rejected by men,

a man of SORROWS, and familiar with pain.

Like one from whom men hide their faces

he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

So, WHAT gave Jesus Joy, and Why? The Joy He had was one that non-believers cannot see – or understand,

But it is a Joy FROM God - and **enduring, not like Happiness** - and it cannot be taken away.

Read AGAIN **Luke 10:21**

As with all Evangelism and sharing of the message of Reconciliation with God, it is tailored to its Hearers.

Yet it is the Work of God – by His Holy Spirit – within a person, who convicts a **them** of God's truth - and brings **them** to repentance.

Without the Working of God's Holy Spirit, our labours may be intense and well-intended, But they **will be** Un-Productive!

If God **does not** send His Spirit to act in people's hearts, our work is failing - and without true effect in people's lives!

In all our ways we need to pray, **to call upon**, and **depend upon God**: to work in and through us –

That in **His** Purposes, that **HE** will get the Glory: that **He** will move in people's lives!

But what a Glorious Message – a Message that allows people to choose their Eternal Destiny!

Whether they choose the Righteous Justice of a Holy God be poured out on them - based on their **Own righteousness**, OR

Immediate and Eternal Forgiveness and Reconciliation with God, Our Debt Cancelled - in Full!

Wouldn't it be great if someone in your early 20's paid off all of your debts and taxes - for the rest of your life?

No More striving and work to achieve what some struggle all their lives to do.

Like an insurmountable mountain – a Sisyphean task, for the rest of our lives – as we labour away!

What a relief, what freedom and liberation from bondage to enslavement, it would be!!

Scripture describes our sin and rebellion against God as **a Debt** we owe Him – A debt that **none of us can pay** – or afford.

Eternally paying (via Torment) is the Just reward that a Righteous God MUST exact **against ALL sin**, and against ALL Rebellion.

It is **Only** Those who accept the FULL PAYMENT that is made by Jesus' death on the cross – who are absolved of this debt.

And WE have that message. We have that responsibility, that **privilege** and that **JOY**.

Let's dig deeper into v21 to see what Jesus is saying here.

Read Luke 10:21.

Joy. Praise. Jesus is FULL of Joy! Jesus praises His Father. **Why Is that?**

It is Because these 72 **have understood WHO Jesus is**, and seeing His power exerted through them.

Jesus is full of Joy – They have **understood the truth**, by God's Spirit's revealing: showing God working in them: **that they BELONG to God!**

They have seen that Jesus **has** (and had endowed them with) authority **over all things physical and spiritual**,

AND That there is NOTHING and No-One that is **more** powerful, or has **more** authority - than Jesus!

They see Jesus, God as Man – for **WHO He really is** – His Power Humbly cloaked in Human Form.

BUT they are YET to see, to fully appreciate, what He is to achieve by his Death **and Resurrection** (that the **Revelation Ch.1 reading** shows)

...but they understand that His Power and Authority is unconstrained by Physical or Spiritual forces.

God opens Eyes and Hearts to see Jesus: as God Incarnate!

This is something that ONLY God can do. And He's done it in the 72 who were sent out – by Jesus.

This JOY is the same as when we KNOW and UNDERSTAND that we belong TO God: that we are under His protection, and Precious to Him.

We read in Psalm 100:1-3

Shout for JOY to the LORD, all the earth. **JOY**

² Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with **JOYful** songs. **JOY**

³ Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and **we are his**;
we are His people, the sheep of His pasture.

The same is declared by king David in **Psalm 28:6-8**

Praise be to the LORD,

for he has heard my cry for mercy.

⁷**The LORD is my strength and my shield;**

my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.

My heart leaps for **JOY**,

JOY

and with my song **I PRAISE him.**

PRAISE

⁸**The LORD is the strength of his people,**

a fortress of SALVATION for his anointed one. **SALVATION**

In that last verse read, note that God being **our** God AND being **our** Saviour are not two separate things.

King David **KNEW** these two things (**Being our** God and **Being our** Saviour) are Synonymous in this relationship, they go together.

He **IS** our God, and therefore He **IS** our Saviour. Jesus name in Hebrew is Yeshua – it means “God Saves” – He **IS** our God, he **IS** our Saviour.

In **Psalm 42:4-5** :

Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

...and this is a Rhetorical question – That it is UNREASONABLE !

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet **PRAISE him,**

PRAISE

my SAVIOUR and my God.

SALVATION

Hope/Trust, **In** God, and the surety of **Our Being His**: lifts up the Downcast, and **Hope** ...comforts the soul Disturbed.

It is ABOUT God – WHO He is: as our Redeemer and Protector – our Relationship **WITH** Him: that Comforts!

In recalling WHO God IS, we remember: it is HE who saves, He who guards and protects, AND who watches over all our ways.

Joy, real Joy, is only found in a **deepening of our relationship** with God as Saviour, He who **cares and provides-for you**: in **EVERY** situation.

This is **the common theme throughout ALL the scriptures** – That there is NO other source of Joy, true Joy.

There is Happiness in Circumstances, yes. But Circumstances and happiness are fleeting - and changeable.

Our Hope and Comfort is NOT to be based on our present situation,

But in our Relationship: as the Beloved of God, our Saviour!

In **Jeremiah 31:7** he writes:

This is what the LORD says:

“Sing with **JOY** for Jacob;
shout for the foremost of the nations.
Make your **PRAISES** heard, and say,
‘LORD, **SAVE** your people,
the remnant of Israel.’

JOY
PRAISE
SALVATION

Joy – and Praise -- are a response to understanding **WHO we are** in Gods sight: God – our Redeemer, and our Saviour!
And we have a **Faithful** God (our Saviour) as declared in The New Covenant: from **Jeremiah Chapter 31:31-34**- onwards,
“The days are coming,” declares the Lord,

“when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.
It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt,
because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them,”
declares the Lord.

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord.

“I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people.

No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’
because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest,”
declares the Lord.

“For I will forgive their wickedness **and will remember their sins no more.**”

God is Faithful to the Relationships he initiates - It is intrinsic to His Nature and Character.

He **never** gives up on His people – But proves Himself Dependable and Reliable in all His Commitments.

He is a Covenant-Keeping, Promise-Keeping God – Who is **Faithful To His Word**.

He never falters or fails in His Covenants or promises once He Commits to them!

He is faithful in ALL His relationships – and that applies to you and me – **Collectively, and Individually**.

Once committed to a relationship and Promise, God goes “All-In”, holding nothing back in His Commitment,

And so when we say “**He is our God, Our redeemer and Saviour**” We declare **not only** a Covenantal relationship made **BY** Him,
But also the CERTAINTY and CONSISTENCY of the Nature of God, of Who He Is,
- that He rescues and saves, and cares for, and watches over **those who are His**.
That His Faithfulness and Loving kindness – who He **IS** –
NEVER FAILS for those He has “Covenanted” - to be in relationship with.

Let me read read **Ps 71:22-23**

I will **praise** you with the harp

for your **faithfulness**, my God;

a **Faithful** God, faithful in his relationship - to His People

I will sing PRAISE to you with the lyre,...

Holy One of Israel.

My lips will shout for JOY

JOY

when I sing PRAISE to you—

PRAISE

I, whom You have DELIVERED. Joy, and Praise, to a **Faithful** God – **Because God is your Saviour and Deliverer.**

JOY, PRAISE and SALVATION are **always** centred around **WHO God is, His Nature, and our Salvation in - and because of – Him.**

So it was in the Old Covenant, as it is in the New!

God rescues us from ourselves, **from our own sin**, and from it’s just consequences !

- and brings us into the precious status of His Redeemed People, His Beloved.
- And so: We are Saved **BY** Him and are saved-and-set-apart **FOR** Him.
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All Praise, Honour and Glory is To, ...and Because of, ...our God,

...who **Alone** is able to save us - and **alone** able to Protect and Deliver - **those that are His**.

Joy in our Salvation – in our Relationship with God - needs to be THE sole focus - for there to be lasting Joy in our lives!

It needs to be the ONLY foundation of our Joy, of our Peace, and of our Contentment – in ALL of life’s circumstances.

As the Apostle Paul writes in **1 Timothy 6:6-9** :

But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have **food and clothing**, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation, and a trap, and into many foolish and **harmful desires** that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

...and in **Hebrews 13:5-6** it says:

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

So we say with confidence, **“The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.**

What can mere man do to me?”

Satan constantly tempts us to take our eyes off – or at least belittle the work of – our **Salvation**, and **therefore** our source of **true Joy** - that is only through, and in, because-of: Jesus.

Satan **always** tempts us to look at our immediate happiness, and circumstances, rather than the **Joy of our Salvation**, - and the Joy we have, because of God’s **faithful love for-us**.

The more time we, You and I, spend with Jesus in Prayer – dwelling in His presence and contemplating His Word, the more **gratitude, Joy and Praise** we have in our lives, as we become more immersed in our Lord and Saviour... – Walking closer to Him, knowing Him better - and **being guided by Him**, in all **His ways**.

So, if you want **Joy and Contentment**, You will need to dig deeper into **what Jesus has done** - for you, And for **your Future...** ...who He is, what He has saved you **from - and to**. **And to Praise Him**.

And **Acknowledge Him** as **your God, as your Saviour**.

He has rescued us from a Just and Eternal Judgement ...to an Eternal inheritance: to being precious **to** God, as His Beloved.

Our Salvation **into** God’s elect is the very thing that needs to be the **ONLY Foundation** that will support us through the grief and trials to come. Turn with me to **1 Peter 1:3-6**

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!

In his great mercy he has given us new birth **into a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ and **into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade**.

This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.

⁶ In all this, you greatly **rejoice**, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.”

Without a deep appreciation of **WHAT** God has done **for and in us**, we will have only **superficial** contentment in turmoil, little strength to endure, and a **failing Hope** to sustain us – in the times that lie ahead.

God **ALONE** needs to be our Strength and Shield, as it is **in Him ALONE** that our Salvation - and Future - is secure.

Also: **it is God’s will that this be formed within us.**

It is God's will: that we do not get weighed down by our present circumstances, or to **strive be 'happy'** in the present.

But that **Our Eyes** be **firmly fixed on Jesus**, The author and perfecter of our faith!

Let me finish with **2 Cor 4:17-18** and **Hebrews 12:1-3**

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us **an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.**

So: we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is **temporary**, but **what is unseen is eternal.**

Hebrews 12:1-3 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses,
let us throw off everything that hinders - and the sin that so easily entangles.

And let us **run with perseverance** the race marked out for us, **fixing our eyes on Jesus**, the author and perfecter of faith.

...who - for the joy set before him - endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, **so that you will not grow weary** ...and lose heart.

We need to **CHOOSE to cast aside ALL our earthly idols** - for our hearts are an idol factory –

...that **ALL** of our life might more reflect **Joy and Praise - TO our Faithful God – because of our Salvation –**

...A salvation **in, and through, and because of Him,** ...and to look toward our promised inheritance - **through Christ Jesus!**

God tells us to **Know – and to Grow** – through the Scriptures.

Summary: What Does God want to do **IN** you:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3

How are **you** going to Work **WITH** God (to make changes)?:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.